





## Hamas militant receives four life sentences for involvement in killings

LOD (AFP) — An Israeli military court sentenced a Palestinian Islamist to four life prison sentences Sunday for involvement in attacks which killed nine people, court officials said.

Rayed Abu Hamdi, 22, a member of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) from the West Bank city of Hebron, was notably convicted of shooting and killing an Israeli soldier, Sharon Edry, as he was being kidnapped by a Hamas squad in September 1996.

Hamdi was also found guilty of helping prepare the bombing of a Tel Aviv cafe last year which killed three Israelis and involved in two drive-by shootings west of Jerusalem that left five Israeli civilians dead.

Upon hearing the sentence, Hamdi smiled and told reporters afterward that he had no regret for the attacks.

"Israelis have also killed civilians," Hamdi said in Hebrew.

One member of the three-judge panel wrote in a minority decision that Hamdi should have received the death sentence for his crimes.

But the majority chose four life sentences plus five years. "These are some of the gravest and most horrible actions that have been brought before an Israeli court," wrote Judge Doron Feiles for the majority.

Hamdi was one of four surviving members of a Hamas squad based in the

West Bank town of Tsurif which Israeli police say killed 13 Israelis in a series of attacks in 1996 and 1997.

One member of the group died when the bomb he was apparently planning to leave in Tel Aviv's Apropos cafe blew up while he was still holding it.

The trial of two other members of the cell will begin on Wednesday and that of the fourth member will begin at the end of June, the court sources said.



MILITIA MEMBER POINTS TO REBEL HIDEOUT: Kabyl patriots Sunday point to a rebel hideout in the mountains 140 kilometres east of Algiers during a patrol. Patriot militiamen patrol the Kabyl region to defend themselves from the rebels, who attack remote villages to spread fear among Algerian civilians (Reuters photo)

## Israel says U.S. rejected compromise on extradition of murder suspect

TEL AVIV (AFP) — U.S. prosecutors have rejected a proposed compromise with Israel over a Jewish-American teenager wanted for murder in the United States, the Israeli state prosecutor told a Jerusalem court Sunday.

Under the compromise, Samuel Sheinbein, 17, would be tried in a U.S. court but serve any prison sentence in Israel for allegedly murdering and dismembering a man in Maryland last September before he fled to Israel.

David Libai, Sheinbein's

Israeli lawyer, had accepted the compromise proposed in April by a Jerusalem district court judge but said his client would only drop his battle against extradition if U.S. prosecutors did not seek the death penalty.

Justice officials in Maryland had expressed concern that Sheinbein would be released early if he served a term in Israel.

Sheinbein was arrested by Israeli police after fleeing the United States shortly after the murder and has since battled

extradition on the grounds that he inherited Israeli citizenship from his Israeli-born father. Israeli nationals may not be extradited under Israeli law.

Israeli Attorney General Eliakim Rubinstein ruled in November that Sheinbein, who had never previously been in Israel, could not claim citizenship.

Rubinstein said Sheinbein's father left Israel as a child before the adoption of a 1952 law which automatically grants citizenship to anyone born of Israeli parents.

## Family says Israeli army refusing to return son's body

RAFAT (AFP) — A Palestinian family called for international action Sunday against the Israeli army, saying it has held the body of their son since November when he died in an unexplained explosion.

Badran Abu Asbar, 24, died Nov. 21 apparently from a bomb that exploded in his hand in the West Bank village of Rafat, southwest of Nablus.

Since then, the army, which controls security in the village, has refused to return the body pending the completion of an investigation into the explosion, said his brother, Zaharan.

The family urged international human rights groups to pressure the Israeli army to return the body so it could be buried.

## German troops arrive to train in Israel for first time

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A group of German army cadets accompanied by German Chief of Staff General Helmut Willmann arrived in Israel Sunday for the first exchange programme between the two countries' armed forces, the army said.

The three-week training programme for the 17 select officer cadets was scheduled to begin with a ceremony at Yad Vashem, the museum and memorial for the six million Jews killed during World War II by Nazi forces under German's Third Reich.

It was the first time a group of German cadets has trained in a country which was not a member of NATO, although individual German officers have participated in Israeli army training courses in the past.

Gen. Willmann was due to leave Israel on Monday after talks with senior Israeli army chiefs.

The cadets were then to begin their training by travelling around Israel and learning the country's history for one week before being split up into groups and assigned to

different battalions, an army spokesman said.

He said the field-training segment of their stay would focus primarily on desert warfare.

Before leaving Germany the officer cadets spent a week in Koblenz, near Bonn, at a preparatory course on German and Israeli history with special emphasis on the Holocaust and neo-Nazism in Germany today.

The German defence ministry called the visit a chance to "build tolerance and openness toward other cultures."

## Saudi offers to help improve U.S.-Iran ties — papers

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia has offered to help bring about rapprochement between the United States and Iran, Saudi-owned newspapers said Sunday.

The London-based daily Al Hayat quoted diplomats in Riyadh as saying that Saudi officials offered U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, who visited the kingdom on Friday and Saturday, to carry the views of the United States to Tehran.

"Diplomatic sources said Saudi Arabia renewed its mediation offer to America to help narrow differences

between Washington and Tehran, by conveying the United States' views on the subject during an upcoming visit by the Saudi foreign minister to Iran," Al Hayat said in a front-page story.

The newspaper said the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal, was due to visit Iran in the "next few days."

Ashtarq Al Awsat, another London-based Saudi-owned newspaper, carried a similar front-page story. Neither dailies gave any further details.

Ties between Saudi Ara-

bia and non-Arab Iran, the Gulf's heavyweights, have been improving since moderate Iranian cleric Mohammad Khatami was elected president last year.

Saudi Arabia is Washington's main Arab ally in the Gulf.

Mr. Khatami has called for dialogue and cultural exchanges between the Iranian and American people.

The newspapers said Mr. Gore's talks with Saudi officials focused on Middle East peace efforts and on the situation in the Gulf.

## Somali faction says it repulsed attack

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A faction in strife-torn Somalia claimed on Sunday that it had fought off an offensive by a rival group in the south of the country and recaptured territory in battles costing around 70 lives.

The Somali National Front (SNF), dominated by members of the Marehan clan, said it had succeeded in fighting off militiamen loyal to Kismayo warlord General Mohammed Said Hersi "Morgan."

Marehan militiamen said they had recaptured the Kabsuma village, 90 kilometres southwest of the Indian Ocean port of Kismayo.

Gen. Morgan's militiamen on Saturday took up defensive

positions at Gobweyn village on the road to Mogadishu, reliable sources here said.

At least 69 people have died and more than 100 others wounded in two weeks of fighting around Kismayo, including six killed and eight wounded in fighting on Saturday, the sources said.

The violence has subsided, but rival militias have continued bringing in reinforcements from other areas.

South Mogadishu warlord Hussein Mohammad Aidede on Saturday said his militia were not involved in the fighting in Kismayo and appealed to the warring sides stop hostilities.

But witnesses said armed wagons believed to belong to

Mr. Aidede's forces had been seen driving from the capital to the battle zone.

Meanwhile, Abdi Mahdi Abdi Salam, a faction leader from the Ogaden clan, has accused Mogadishu warlords of "instigating violence" in Kismayo.

Mr. Abdi Salam, in a letter to AFP's Nairobi bureau, accused Mr. Aidede and supporters of the SNF of committing atrocities against the people of southern Somalia despite efforts by local elders to pacify the region.

"The Mogadishu factions must not interfere in the affairs of Kismayo after they failed to resolve their differences in their own fiefdoms," Mr. Abdi Salam said.

## World Press Photo laureate gives prize to orphans of Algerian violence

ALGIERS (AFP) — An Algerian photo-reporter who won 1997's World Press Photo Award for his picture of a woman devastated by her children's deaths in a massacre gave his cash prize Sunday to orphans of violence.

Hocine, a correspondent for Agence France Presse, took the picture of the woman outside a hospital last September. It has been named the "Algerian Madonna" for its portrayal of one

impact of the country's strife. Hocine said he wished to "contribute in a modest way to easing the suffering of children left without families or resources in an Algeria torn asunder by blind violence."

He gave his prize of \$7,500, received in Amsterdam on April 20, to the Benevolent Algerian Association for Childhood and Wellcoming Families (AAEFAB), a charity which aims to find families for orphans

and particularly the thousands whose parents have been killed since 1992.

A woman who had been leaning weakly against a wall after a systematic overnight slaughter at Bentatla near Algiers suddenly sank to the ground. Hocine caught her hopeless collapse on film.

"She has just learnt that her eight children are dead," a nearby woman said. Hocine's record of the moment made front pages worldwide and was selected

by a nine-strong jury from 36,041 submissions by 3,627 photographers.

Hocine, whose full name is withheld to protect his identity in Algeria, has been working for AFP for five years.

A travelling exhibition of his work is being shown this year in Paris, Cologne, London, New York, Tokyo, Milan and Johannesburg, as well as in Bosnia and Kazakhstan.

## Kuwait invasion remains obstacle to Arab summit — GCC

DUBAI (AFP) — The rift caused by Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait still poses an obstacle to the holding of a successful Arab summit, the secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said Sunday.

"We must not forget that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait aroused bitterness, anger, hatred and a lack of confidence in the Iraqi regime," Jamil Al Hujailan said in an interview with the Arabic daily Al Hayat.

"For a full Arab summit to achieve

its objectives, we must work to eliminate the after effects" of the invasion, said the head of the GCC, which groups Saudi Arabia with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"I don't think there are differences between the GCC countries over their relations with Iraq," which has been under U.N. economic sanctions since the invasion, he said.

"But that does not prevent certain member states from expressing their

sympathy for the Iraqi people [under sanctions] or from hosting Iraqi government delegations," said Mr. Hujailan.

The UAE, Qatar and Oman support moves towards a normalisation with Iraq, while Kuwait is firmly opposed.

Iraq was excluded from the last Arab summit, held in Cairo in June 1996.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said at the time that Iraq was not invited because of "sensitivities" left over from the invasion.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

IAEA probing evidence Pakistan offered to help Iraq with nukes

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is looking into evidence that a top Pakistani scientist may have offered to help Iraq build a nuclear bomb, Newsweek reported. In its most recent issue, the weekly newsmagazine reported that the IAEA has a memorandum from Iraq's intelligence service to the nuclear-weapons directorate which reports a proposal from "Pakistani scientist Dr. Abd El Qader Khan." Iraq confirmed the document in December but said that they had rejected the offer because of fear it was a sting, and Pakistan called it a fraud, Newsweek reported.

Iran, Iraq to resume prisoner exchanges on May 15

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq and Iran are to resume prisoner exchanges on May 15 with the aim of finally closing the file on prisoners of war (PoWs) from their 1980-1988 war, an Iraqi newspaper said Sunday. The weekly Al Nassawa Al Arabi said a joint commission on PoWs decided on the date, but there was no immediate confirmation from the Baghdad office of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

47,000 bottles of alcohol destroyed in UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Arabian desert was soaked with alcohol as bulldozers crushed 47,000 bottles and buried them in a crackdown on illegal liquor trade in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), newspapers reported Sunday. The 12,000 bottles of beer and 35,000 bottles of whisky, wine and other liquors were embedded under the sand on Saturday in Sharjah, the third biggest emirate in the oil-rich UAE. They were seized in a string of police raids on shops and houses over the past year as part of a clampdown on illegal liquor trade following Sharjah's decision in the late 1980s to ban alcohol.

## Home N

Jordanian-German business day opens tomorrow

AMMAN (R) — The Jordanian Chamber of Industry and the Association of Industrial Chambers of Industry and Commerce Systems (ACI) are holding a joint seminar with the German Trade and Investment Commission in Jordan (GTIC) on Tuesday.

The ACI recently made a memorandum of understanding with the German Trade and Investment Commission in Jordan (GTIC) to promote trade and investment between the two countries.

The seminar will be held in the Jordanian Chamber of Industry and Commerce Systems (JCI) building in Amman. It will be attended by representatives of the ACI, GTIC, and the German Trade and Investment Commission in Jordan.

JVA hotel

AMMAN (R) — The Jordanian Chamber of Industry and Commerce Systems (JCI) is planning to build a new hotel in Amman. The hotel is expected to be completed by the end of the year. It will have 100 rooms and will be a five-star hotel. The hotel is planned to be built on a site in the center of Amman. The hotel is expected to be a major landmark in the city.

Gover

recent

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Sarath arrives in Qatar for visit

DOHA (R) — HRH Princess Sarath, accompanied by her husband, Prince Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, arrived in Qatar Sunday for a three-day visit. The visit is part of a tour of the Gulf states. Princess Sarath will meet with Qatari officials and will attend a number of social events. She will also visit the Qatari National Museum and the Qatari National Library.

Wave to hit Kingdom

DOHA (R) — A heavy wave of rain is expected to hit the Kingdom of Qatar in the next few days. The weather department has issued a warning for heavy rain and strong winds. The rain is expected to cause flooding in some areas. The weather department has advised the public to take precautions.

What's going on

DOHA (R) — The Qatari National Museum is planning to hold a series of lectures on the history and culture of Qatar. The lectures will be held in the museum's auditorium. The first lecture will be held on Tuesday. The lectures are free of charge. The museum is located in Doha.

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15:30 Drama — Raider of the South Pacific  
16:00 Drama — Neighbours  
16:30 Doc — Last Frontiers  
17:00 French Programme — Thalassa  
18:00 Acapulco Bay  
19:00 Le Journal  
19:15 French Programme  
19:30 News headlines  
19:35 Comedy — Hope and Gloria  
20:00 Doc — Perspective  
21:10 Marker — "Snow Ball's In Hawaii"  
22:00 News in English  
22:30 Law and Order — "Second Opinion"  
23:10 Bay Watch Nights — "Takeover"  
23:59 End of T.X.

## PRAYER TIMES

04:17 Fajr  
05:43 Sunrise/Duha  
12:32 Dhuhr  
16:12 Asr  
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## CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

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## Jordanian-German business day opens tomorrow

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) and the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce System Abroad (DIHT), in cooperation with the German embassy and the Investment Promotion Corporation, will hold a Jordanian-German business promotion day for Sahab-based local industrialists on Tuesday.

The ACI recently made business networking and provision of information on Jordanian industries a priority after Jordan signed a partnership deal with the European Union (EU) in November.

The Kingdom is working on entering into the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO) later this year.

The event, to be held in Sahab at the Jordan Industrial Estates Corporation, falls within the framework of encouraging the development of business opportunities between German and Jordanian industrialists by showing the "depth" of cooperation and coordination between the chamber and DIHT, an ACI statement said.

The promotion-oriented event will include the expertise of Matthias Oehmüller and Von Oppenkobsky from the Commercial Department of the German embassy and Helmut Berndt from the GIZ project for standardisation.

These experts will offer consultation on export investment, business cooperation and European customs, standards and norms, as well as marketing events, said Maria Riedel, DIHT representative in Jordan.

The ACI and DIHT have a partnership agreement. Among the two organisations' most recent joint projects were structuring the ACI's database, which is described as having unmatched pioneering "depth of detail" in comparison to other DIHT members and has been on-line since March.

The ACI Website has become a focal point for the National Database of Local Industries, which is fed information through the Industrial Committee of the National Information Centre.

There are currently 73 DIHT chambers of commerce and industry in 80 countries around the globe.



Minister of Water and Irrigation Monther Haddadin and the general manager of the Hussein Attieh Contracting Company sign the contract Sunday (Petra photo)

## JVA awards JD1.6m Dead Sea hotel water supply contract

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Sunday awarded a local firm a JD1.6 million contract to supply water to the hotels being built on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

According to Minister of Water and Irrigation Monther Haddadin, who signed the deal with the general manager of the Hussein Attieh Contracting Company, the project entails laying a 19.4-kilometre water pipeline within 300 days from the Kafrein region to the

hotels. Dr. Haddadin said the project is one of a series of plans, including other infrastructure services such as electricity, telephones and roads, to develop the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

The contract stipulates that the pipeline draw water from three artesian wells with a combined capacity of 300 cubic metres an hour that have been drilled at Kafrein, he said.

Four hotels are being constructed at the Dead Sea by

Jordanian and foreign investors, including the American Marriott chain, the French group ACCOR, the Hyatt hotel chain and a German company. Their total investment could reach \$280 million.

The construction of the four hotels, part of an ambitious plan to build 8,000 rooms along the Dead Sea by the year 2010, will add 1,600 rooms to the 100 available at the Dead Sea Spa Hotel, Jordan's only hotel in the area.

## Government investigations into recent spate of crimes continuing

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government on Sunday said it was investigating a spate of recent crimes and bombings alien to a country has always prided itself with security in a volatile region.

Minister of Interior Nafith Rashid declined to confirm or deny the media's allegation that several suspects were arrested following last week's attacks against former security officials, the head of the Royal Medical Services, the headquarters of the Highway Patrol and a four-star hotel.

"Security authorities are continuing their investigations and are carrying out their duties to uncover those behind these acts," he told the Jordan Times yesterday.

The minister declined to comment on a report from the Lebanese capital Beirut on Sunday in which a previously unknown group claimed responsibility for the car bombing at Al Quds International Hotel on Thursday.

Agence France Presse (AFP) said the Abu Thar Al Ghafary Group faxed a statement to the agency office in Beirut claiming responsibility for the explosion. No one was killed or injured.

The statement said the explosion occurred before "the celebration that was conducted by the embassy of the enemy [Israel] in Amman" to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Jewish state.

The daily Al Arab Al Yawm said in a report yesterday that the house of the director of the Royal Medical Services Major General Yousef Qasous, was sprayed by bullets, but no one was injured.

It also said molotov cocktail bombs were thrown at a few police cars earlier last week.

A car belonging to former head of the General Intelligence Department, Mohammad Rasoul Kilani, was set on fire Tuesday. No one was injured.

Police on Saturday said a total of 46,713 crimes were recorded last year, an increase

of 1.9 per cent over 1996, but insisted that Jordan remained free of organised crime.

"The crime rate in Jordan is low compared with other Arab countries," said Lt. Col Ahmad Qudrah from the Public Security Department.

Lt. Col. Qudrah said homicides comprised the lowest number of crimes and misdemeanours resulting from quarrels were the most commonly reported offences. He said premeditated murders were decreasing.

He said crimes that were "alien to the traditions and customs of Jordanian society are minimal," an apparent reference to last January's fatal stabbing of a senior Iraqi diplomat and several others, including a prominent businessman. The assailants remain at large.

Another crime that shook Jordan was April's fatal shooting of top lawyer Hana Nadeh, his son Suhail and prominent psychiatrist, Awad Sa'ad. The three were found dead at Dr. Sa'ad's clinic in Amman and assailants also remain at large.

## Israeli airspace open again to RJ following one-day wildcat strike

By Amy Henderson  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) official yesterday said Israel had reopened its airspace to international flights early Sunday morning after it closed its national airspace unexpectedly on Saturday.

Captain Jasser Ziyad, head of the CAA, told the Jordan Times that Royal Jordanian (RJ) flights, temporarily diverted to Syrian airspace, had, for the time being, resumed their normal course

of flight over Israeli airspace yesterday morning. But a strike by Israeli air controllers may again disrupt the flights next Saturday.

Capt. Ziyad said RJ flights destined for Europe and North America had been diverted due to a strike by Israeli air controllers, which took the Israeli Airport Authority by surprise on the Jewish Sabbath. Yesterday, RJ officials said Israeli authorities had not given them a reason for diverting the flights.

According to Israeli Embassy spokesperson Ro'ey

Gilad, air controllers went on strike to protest regulations issued nearly one month ago by the Israeli Airport Authority that included new regulations on working hours and shifts on the Sabbath.

The Israeli airports authority spokesperson Pin Schiff was quoted by AP yesterday as saying that the controllers held the wildcat strike in violation of an agreement with the authority.

"The controllers weren't happy with the new statutes and decided to go on strike without telling anyone," he said. Mr. Gilad added that he

was still unaware of their particular grievances with the new regulations, but said the airport authority is now considering disciplinary action against the controllers.

"Royal Jordanian is not the only airline that has suffered from this strike," he said. "All Israeli and international flights have been affected by this."

Both Capt. Ziyad and Mr. Gilad said they hoped the airport authority and controllers would have the issue resolved by next Saturday, when flights will have to be again diverted if the strike resumes.

## PSD to mark Traffic Day with ceremony

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) today is holding a ceremony at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman to mark Traffic Day and Arab Traffic Week, according to a PSD official.

Major General Abdul Raouf Hussein, assistant PSD director for traffic affairs, said the ceremony, to be held under the patronage of Minister of Interior Nafith Rashid, is designed to focus attention on the increasing number of road accidents in the Kingdom.

In 1967, the United Nations called on the countries of the world to observe May 4 each year as a world traffic day to draw attention to the carnage on the roads and to raise public awareness on the danger of accidents, Maj. Gen. Hussein said.

The observance of Traffic Day as well as Arab Traffic Week is aimed at focusing attention on the magnitude of this problem and drawing attention to the huge human and material losses that the Kingdom is incurring each year, he added.

Referring to accidents in Jordan, Maj. Gen. Hussein noted that in 1993, 24,799 accidents killed 440 people and injured 11,754; in 1994, 26,837 accidents caused the death of 443 persons and the injury of 12,516 others; and in 1995, 28,970 accidents killed 469 persons and injured 13,184.

Last year, there were 39,005 accidents, causing the death of 577 persons and the injury of 16,259 others.

## Awqaf minister briefs Iranian cleric on shrine renovations

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi on Sunday said the ministry was planning to build a "charitable business centre" in the centre of Amman as part of its projects to raise funds for charity.

Speaking at a meeting with Ayatollah Jaffer Subhani, visiting director of the Imam Sadeq religious institution in the Iranian city of Qom, Dr. Abbadi outlined the ministry's investment plans and its role in collecting zakat (alms for the poor) and training mosque preachers.

Dr. Abbadi also reviewed Jordan's endeavours to restore and refurbish the Dome of the

Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. He noted that the 1994 restoration campaign was the third such Hashemite project, following previous renovations in 1924 and 1964.

The minister briefed Ayatollah Subhani on the current restoration of Islamic shrines and the tombs of the Prophet Mohammad's companions buried in Jordan, including Abi Obeidah Amer Ben Al Jarrah, who is buried in the Jordan Valley.

The cost of restoring that shrine alone is expected to reach JD4 million because it will be adjoined to a complex that includes a library and a Koran teaching school, among

other facilities, and will be surrounded by a public garden.

Referring to the management of holy shrines in occupied Jerusalem, Dr. Abbadi said the task is entrusted to the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

The minister spoke in detail on the role of the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation, which he said has been providing relief aid to areas in Islamic countries exposed to natural disasters.

The Iranian cleric later called at the King Abdullah the Martyr Mosque and inspected the museum, which displays artefacts from different Islamic eras.

## Majali asks labour ministry to determine number of unemployed, guest workers

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Sunday requested that the Ministry of Labour conduct an in-depth study and all necessary surveys to identify the actual number of unemployed Jordanians as well as guest workers in the Kingdom.

Speaking during a meeting with Minister of Labour Mohammad Farhan, Secretary General Saleh Tarawneh and the ministry's planning committee, Dr. Majali said the studies are needed to help the government make decisions concerning the problem of unemployment.

Dr. Majali also called for coordination of efforts between the concerned government departments and employers and workers to help find the best way to deal with the unemployment question.

He emphasised the need for

the Ministry of Labour to cooperate with the ministerial committee entrusted with organising the labour market. The prime minister also urged the ministry to give due attention to training programmes with the goal of raising the efficiency and productivity of Jordanian workers to enable them to meet the demands of economic and social changes, both regional and international.

Dr. Majali urged Jordanian youth searching for jobs to accept the available employment opportunities, which he said are estimated to be in the tens of thousands. Jordanian youth should transcend the "culture of shame" in their quest for jobs, he added.

The prime minister said the youth, including college graduates, should take advantage of loans provided by the country's different funds to start small and medium size

projects to earn a living.

Dr. Majali took part in a general discussion by committee members about unemployment and listened to the views of the directors of the ministry's departments.

Last week, the prime minister gave permission for a national conference to be held in August on the problem of unemployment in Jordan.

The conference was approved after he received a proposal to this effect from Minister of Administrative Development Bassam Emoush.

Both the private and public sectors will be represented at the meeting, during which several working papers are to be reviewed.

Government sources have estimated that there are at least 100,000 unemployed Jordanians at present, while 600,000 non-Jordanians are working in the country.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Princess Sarvath arrives in Qatar for visit

DOHA (Petra) — HRH Princess Sarvath, accompanied by HRH Princess Rahmah, Sunday began a three-day visit to Qatar upon the invitation of Sheikh Moza. Princess Sarvath will visit a number of Qatari educational centres, institutions, and universities, as well as centres for educating persons with special needs. She will also discuss scopes of cooperation in educational fields with the Qatari minister of education. Princess Sarvath and her accompanying delegation were received upon arrival at Doha airport by the wives of the Qatari prime minister and foreign minister as well as other personalities in Qatar.

### Heat wave to hit Kingdom

AMMAN (Petra) — A heat wave will affect the Kingdom over the next few days, with temperatures above the seasonal average by nine-11 degrees, according to the Meteorology Department. They added that winds will be southeasterly moderate to active.

## what's going on

- FILMS**
  - \* Two films entitled "The Last Empire" and "Famous Five" at the British Council, Jabel Amman on Tuesday, May 5, at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, May 6, at 6:00 p.m. respectively.
  - \* "Le Sauvage" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Amman at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.
- LECTURES**
  - \* "Political Life and the Challenges of Building Parties in Jordan" (in Arabic) by Secretary General of the National Constitutional Party Abdul Hadi Majali at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabel Amman at 6:30 p.m.
  - \* "Poems About Animals" by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Council, Jabel Amman at 5:00 p.m.
  - \* "USAID's Expanded Role and New Opportunities" by Brian Atwood from USAID at the Le Meridien Hotel (former Fort Grand) on Tuesday, May 5, at 2:30 p.m.
  - \* Works by Muhammad Ali 'Amiri at the Jordan Writers Association building, Jabel Weibdeh (Tel. 4621724), until May 8.
  - \* Works by Ecuadorian artist Olmedo Quimbira at Instituto Cervantes, Jabel Amman, until May 12.

## Growing scepticism among journalists over new press law

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Journalists on Sunday observed International Press Day as scepticism grows over the extent of freedom the government and Parliament will grant them under a new press law.

His Majesty King Hussein last month asked the government to present a new law to replace the tough press revisions that were introduced in May but overturned by the

High Court in January. Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour told editorial writers recently that the government will introduce a balanced law that guarantees freedom of expression while guarding national interests and preventing offences and the spread of false information.

While most journalists fear the new law will limit freedom of expression, some blamed their own publishers for failing to improve their editorial operation and raise the standard of

the profession. Journalists are in a "continuous struggle for press freedom," the publisher of the outspoken Al Mithaq weekly, Nihad Hantar, said.

He told the Jordan Times that he believed the tug of war between the press and the government was resulting in a continuous state of confusion.

"The government wants to maintain control of the press, [but] since it cannot resort to martial law, it uses a constitutional tool to restrict press freedom," Mr. Hantar said.

"The media meanwhile is weak and fearful from the imposed laws. They should fight for their freedom," he added.

He expected that the new draft law to be a copy of the law that the High Court rejected as being unconstitutional and that the ceiling of freedom will remain low because the new one will not allow all those "yearning for freedom of expression to practice it."

Fahed Fanek, Jordan's leading columnist and a strong defender of freedom of expression, also expressed fear that the new draft law might impose even further "uncalled for" restrictions.

In his column in Al Ra'i yesterday, Mr. Fanek said the law must include professional and advanced journalism codes that lift the ceiling of freedom and give the final authority to the courts, and not the government, to punish offenders.

"The new law will be a turning point in Jordan's history. It will either advance democracy or retreat it to a point that will eventually lead to our loss," he wrote.

He, as well as other journalists, however defended the level of freedom of expression in Jordan as being far better than in many neighbouring countries.

The president of the Jordanian Press Association (JPA), Seif Sharif, told the Jordan Times yesterday that though last year witnessed a setback for freedom of expression, it provided journalists with a lesson.

He said both journalists and the government should learn from their past mistakes, especially last year's experience when the government felt it had to introduce a temporary law because of inaccurate media practice.

He said he was optimistic with the government's intent to follow the proper channels to introduce a far better law

that will grant journalists more freedom.

On the occasion of International Press Day, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) issued a list last week of 10 world leaders that it labelled as the "enemies of the press."

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali was placed on the list. The CPJ statement said: "In a little more than a year in office, Majali has mounted a harsh offensive against Jordan's outspoken independent press, known for its aggressive coverage of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty."

Government officials were not immediately available for comment on the statement issued by the CPJ.

Also on the occasion, the Jordan Society for Human Rights (JSHR) said freedom of the press and the right of citizens to have access to information deteriorated last year.

In a statement, the JSHR urged the government to consult with journalists and Parliament before finalising the new law and called on it to honour those international human rights accords which Jordan has signed.

"In monitoring the exercises of press freedoms in the past year, the JSHR regrettably did not find any bright aspects that deserve praise," the statement said, adding that it viewed last year as "a black year for freedom of the press and expression in Jordan."

Some inmates at Talha had slashed their wrists in protest against alleged abuse and illegal detention.

Jordanian and ICRC officials could not confirm whether two Jordanians involved in the suicide attempt were included in the group of prisoners to be expelled.

Relations between Jordan and Kuwait soured during the Gulf war. The emirate downgraded its diplomatic representation in Amman to the level of charge d'affaires, while the Jordanian mission in Kuwait has remained closed since 1990.

Over 250,000 Jordanians, many of Palestinian origin, were forced to flee Kuwait because of the crisis.

However, bilateral ties have improved over the last several months, with the foreign ministries of both countries announcing plans to restore full diplomatic relations in June 1997. Royal Jordanian and Kuwait Airways also resumed flights to each other's capitals after a seven-year suspension.

## Relatives leave for Kuwait to visit Jordanian detainees

(Continued from page 1)

Jordanians to meet with relatives detained in Kuwait," added Mr. Qassis, assistant to the head of the ICRC delegation for information.

The Geneva-based world organisation will cover all travel and accommodation expenses.

Previous visits took place in June and September 1995, and in January 1997. Press reports earlier this month said that a group of 41 Jordanians were to visit 25 imprisoned relatives in the fourth trip.

However, Mr. Qassis explained that both the number of visitors and prisoners to be visited decreased because "some of the detainees were released."

He was referring to an Apr. 27 decision by Kuwait's emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, to grant a special pardon to 13 Jordanian prisoners, on the occasion of the Islamic holiday of the Hijri new year.

A first group of 10 Jordanian prisoners was released last February. News reports from Kuwait City last

week quoted Kuwaiti Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al Sabah as saying that an additional 25 Jordanians held at the Talha deportation centre would be expelled and sent back home on a collective passport.

But the reports did not say when the detainees would be repatriated or for how long they have been held at the controversial deportation centre — a thorn in Kuwait's ties with international human rights groups.

Talha station, south of Kuwait City, has recently been at the centre of a heated debate, with human rights organisations urging the Kuwaiti government to close the facility because of alleged human rights violations and the centre's inadequacy to accommodate the over 400 prisoners currently held there.

Kuwait responded by saying that it could not close the station, because many of the prisoners held there, mainly Iraqis, either do not want to go home, have nowhere to go, or must pay overdue residency fees. Newspapers reported last month that





## More than 100 hurt in Indonesian student protests

JAKARTA (AFP) — Clashes between students demanding political changes and security forces in three Indonesian towns Saturday left 77 policemen and at least 60 students injured, six of them by rubber-coated bullets, reports said Sunday.

The rubber bullets were fired at the Teachers' University in East Jakarta where 33 other students were also seriously injured in addition to the six, Kompas daily said. It said 28 members of the security forces were hurt during the clash, which followed an attempt by some 2,000 students to march down the street to a nearby university.

Jakarta police chief Lieutenant Colonel Edward Artonang was quoted by the Bisnis Indonesia daily as saying only 20 students and 28 members of the security forces had been injured. "All injured students have returned to their homes," Gen. Artonang said.

"They had been hit by a fence that fell down and not because of shots fired by personnel," Another encounter at the Academy for Foreign Languages in central Jakarta left three students injured.

At Malang in East Java students and police fought in two separate incidents and 49 policemen and 30 students were injured, the East

Java-based Jawa Pos daily said. It said scuffles broke out as students of the Merdeka University and the National Technology Institute attempted to protest on the streets Saturday.

The Jawa Pos said the injuries occurred in the clash with students of the institute in which security forces used tear gas, water cannon and warning shots while the students threw rocks and other debris.

Violence at the Jember University in the town of

the same name 120 kilometres east of Malang left one student injured, the Jawa Pos said.

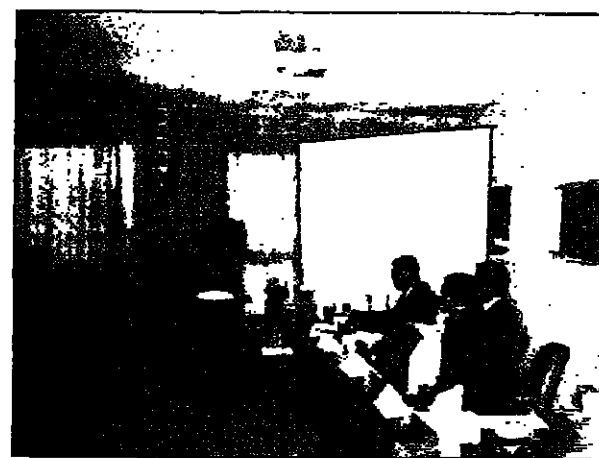
Student demonstrations to demand political reforms but not involving violence also took place in campuses across Jakarta and in several other cities on the islands of Java, Sumatra and Sulawesi Saturday.

At Medan in North Sumatra, a lawyer from the local branch of the Legal Aid Institute said demonstrators from Nommensen University torched a military police

jeep. The North Sumatra military spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Agus Ramadhan, denied the report. He was quoted by Antara news agency as saying students took a new Nissan car from a showroom and burnt it in front of the campus.

Student rallies were also reported at Bandung and Bogor in West Java, at Yogyakarta and Solo in central Java, at Palembang in South Sumatra and at Ujungpandang in South Sulawesi.

## Increasing demand for Technical Assistance from the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team



THE EURO-JORDANIAN Business Service Programme's activities are now being introduced directly to enterprise managements around Jordan. These venues are organised in cooperation with the Industrial Development Unit of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Jordanian Industrial Estates' Corporation and Jordanian Business Associations. The first three venues took place at the Sahab Industrial Estate, at Al Hassan Industrial Estate in Irbid and at the Zarqa Chamber of Commerce.

The Jordanian business establishment has responded extremely positively to the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team's proposition to provide tailored and integrated technical assistance directly to Jordanian Private Enterprises. It is important to stress that the technical assistance addresses the needs of individual enterprises and that the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre is an independent, professional non-profit organisation that operates directly and in full confidence with its counterparts.

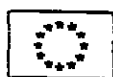
Many promising contacts have already been established. Soon, the first enterprises will be included in the project cycle, which consists of three components:

The Primary Support Component will define and focus on the main opportunities and challenges of the individual enterprises. Following that, the General Support Component will establish an activity plan aiming at finding the right solutions and implementing the subsequent changes. Finally, the Specialised Support Component may be applied in certain cases, where special expertise is needed. The Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre's activities are funded by the European Union (EU) represented by the European Commission (EC) under the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement. Similar Programmes are facilitated by the EC in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, the West Bank, and Syria.

In Egypt, the programme has been in operation since 1996. The programme now operates at full capacity. More than 300 enterprises from virtually all sectors of Egyptian business environment are now included in the project cycle. Sound consulting experience, confidentiality, and independence are the key aspects of the success of the programmes.

### Coming events

The Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team will be hosted by the Jordanian Businessmen Association May 5, by the Salt Chamber of Commerce May 4, by the Jordan Export Development Corporation May 6, by the Amman Chamber of Industry May 11 and by the Business & Professional Women's Club May 13.



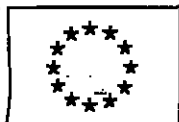
EURO-JORDANIAN • BUSINESS SERVICE TEAM



### Call for Expressions of Interest

Consulting firms and institutions with specialised expertise in statistical studies, opinion surveys, and statistical analysis are requested to send details of their qualifications and past experience in these fields to the address provided herein below. Qualified applicants may be invited to submit quotations for specific research assignments. Information should be submitted no later than: May 21, 1998.

Call for Expression of Interest No. DBA/CEE/826  
Delegation of the European Commission  
P. O. Box 926794 Amman 11110  
Fax: 5686746  
E-mail: eudelfor@go.com.jo



EURO-JORDANIAN • BUSINESS SERVICE TEAM



External aid and European Development Fund - Tender notice (non structured)  
(98/S70-42308/EN) JO-Amman: business consultancy services

Call For Expressions of Interest in favour of Jordan Concerning a project financed by the European Community - Call For Expressions of Interest no. IB/AMI/344

- Awarding authority:** The European Community, represented by the European Commission. Correspondence should be sent to: Delegation of the EC, PO Box 926794 Amman 11110, Jordan.
- Type:** Call for expressions of interest. Persons who are interested in having their name entered on a list of potential contractors are invited to submit their application in accordance with the rules set out below. The awarding department will draw up a list of candidates who meet the criteria set out in point 8 below. Each time a specific contract is to be concluded relating to the field, the awarding authority will send the specifications to some of the candidates on the list, selected on the basis of special criteria for the contract concerned.

- Description of the call for expression of interest:** Expressions of interest are sought from service providers from the European Community countries, Jordan, or from other countries benefiting from the MEDA programme with the capability to offer short-term consultancy services to Jordanian private sector enterprises. Service providers with experience in the following areas are required:

• Corporate Planning	• Marketing & Market Analysis	• Management Training
• Management Development	• Human Resources Development	• Production Line Management
• Packaging	• Technology Procurement	• Business Collaboration
• Product Design & Development	• Financial Systems & Management	• Business Information Services
• Productivity Improvement	• Accountancy & Finance / Credit	• Institutional Development
• Quality Control & Standards	• Companies & Commercial Laws	• Investment Promotion

Service providers may be generalists or have expertise in a particular sector. Expertise is required, inter alia, in the following sectors:

• Garments & Textiles	• Plastics & Chemicals	• Leather
• Agricultural Industry	• Pharmaceutical & Cosmetics	• Gifts & Toys
• Manufacturing	• Tourism & Hospitals	

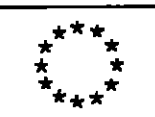
- Place of execution:** Jordan
- Expiry date of the list resulting from the call for expressions of interest:** April 01, 2001
- Not Applicable.**
- Address to which applications should be sent:** Applications, comprising one original and one copy, must be sent by post (normal, registered, or express) in an envelope stating "Call for expressions of interest No. IB/AMI/344" to the address in (1) above. Companies or grouping of companies or service providers are required to provide the documents referred to in point 8.

### Information to be supplied by candidates:

- extract from the Judicial record or equivalent document (for the self-employed),
- certificate demonstrating that the applicant is in order with obligations regarding tax and social security payments,
- certificate of enrolment on the professional register or the trade register,
- the company's balance sheet or overall turnover from the past three years (for legal persons),
- references of services provided and the value of these services over the past three years,
- statement of average annual staff numbers for managerial staff over the past three years,

Appropriate service providers will be those with experience in countries similar to Jordan and with excellent knowledge of modern management practice, relevant international standards for their areas of specifications, a good knowledge of European as well as international markets and have excellent communication skills.

- Contract covered by EC Council Regulation No. 1448/96 of 23/07/1996 (MEDA).**



EURO-JORDANIAN • BUSINESS SERVICE TEAM



### INVITATION TO PRIVATE SECTOR ENTERPRISES IN JORDAN

The Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team invites private enterprises to participate in the Private Sector Development Programme. The primary purpose of this three-year Programme, launched under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, is to promote the growth of market economy in Jordan by providing direct assistance to private businesses within virtually all sectors of production and services.

The Programme is financed by the European Union through the MEDA line in agreement and co-operation with the Government of Jordan. The main component of the Programme is the Business Support Service, which offers direct expert consultancy assistance to individual enterprises based on individual assessment of needs. No direct loans or grant facilities are included in the Programme. Due to financial and time constraints participation is limited.

Private enterprises wishing to participate in this Programme must conform to the following criteria for eligibility to receive assistance:

### Eligibility Criteria

- Registered private Jordanian legal entity
- Jordanian ownership majority
- Manufacturing or service
- Documented sustained activity over time
- Sustainable financial situation
- More than 10 and less than 200 employees
- Certified financial accounts
- Willingness to share costs at moderate level
- Managerial analytical capabilities

In order to facilitate the process of application the following establishments have been kind enough to avail the application forms and relevant information on the Programme at their offices:

• Jordan Export Development & Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCO)	Tel: 5603507	Fax: 5684568
• The Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC)	Tel: 5531081	Fax: 5521084
• Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI)	Tel: 4843001	Fax: 4847852
• The Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce (FCC)	Tel: 5684425	Fax: 5685997
• Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA)	Tel: 5680855	Fax: 5680663
• Jordan Trade Association (JTA)	Tel: 5685603	Fax: 5685605
• Jordan Business & Professional Women Club (JBPWC)	Tel: 5511647	Fax: 5530092

The information and forms can also be obtained from the Delegation of the European Commission in Amman, or the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team at the following addresses:

Delegation of the  
European Commission  
Shmeisani, 15 Al-Jaheth St.  
Tel: +962-6-5668191  
Fax: +962-6-5686746  
e-mail: eudelfor@go.com.jo

Euro-Jordanian • Business Service Team  
Jabal Amman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle - Muhamed Hafiz Maath St.  
P. O. Box: 182938 - Amman 11118, Jordan  
Tel: +962-6-4654050  
Fax: +962-6-4652374  
e-mail: bst@index.com.jo



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### Little hope for London talks

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meet in London today for talks that are certain to irrevocably alter the direction of the peace process. The positions of the two sides are well known: Arafat has publicly accepted a U.S. proposal for a 13 per cent Israeli redeployment from the West Bank, while Netanyahu maintains that Israel's security interests would be endangered by a pullout in the double digit percentage. Both insist that these numbers are not subject to negotiation.

What the talks have been set up to be, then, is a test of nerves, of who will blink first. And if neither side backs down, then the last remaining option for the Palestinians are the Americans. The question of this entire exercise is, will the U.S. finally put pressure on Israel? All indications are that they won't.

The U.S. proposal for a 13 per cent withdrawal was never published, for fear on the part of the Americans of antagonising the Israelis. The Oslo accords were vague on the size of the Israeli redeployments but not on their number. Three were to be carried out before final status negotiations start. Yet Israel's new plan, and that of the U.S. as well, stipulate only two. The Americans have also failed to obtain Israeli agreement on a settlement construction "freeze" and notably, the U.S. Congress last month came out overwhelmingly in favour of the Israeli position, gently "suggesting" to President Clinton to urge the Palestinians to accept whatever is offered to them.

The positions of the two leaders are clear. Netanyahu is under pressure from his cabinet, his constituents, and his own former promises, not to hand back land to the Palestinians. He will be under no pressure from the Americans. Arafat, on the other hand, is faced with a growing discontent from his people, who have been bogged down in a peace process that has delivered little in nearly four years. And unlike the countless times the U.S. has come out publicly in support of Israel, it has never done the same for the Palestinians.

There is no need for the Israeli government to speed up negotiations. Netanyahu has taken the clue from Yitzhak Shamir, who stated that if he had remained prime minister, he would have dragged negotiations out for 10 years while settling a half-million Jewish "souls" in the West Bank. In addition, he has put the Palestinian National Authority on an endless loop, demanding that unspecified steps be taken to curb extremist activity.

Time, however, is of the essence for Arafat. The only way out of the seemingly endless cycle of violence and mutual recriminations is for President Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and the rest of the administration to stand up, stop being "pessimistic" on the talks, and put the screws to Israel, for once, to honour its agreements.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Munes Razzaz Sunday said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has proved to be stronger than the sole superpower now ruling the world through his actions and his behaviour of defying the world and disregarding the United Nations as well as the U.S. It would not be surprising if we hear Netanyahu demanding that the Arab World withdraw from 91 per cent of the present lands under the Arab countries' control so that Israel's empire can be built, said the writer. He said Netanyahu is the only statesman who can slap America in the face without having to fear any reprisal, he is the only government leader in the world who has insulted the world community and the United Nations without fearing any sanctions and he is the only politician in the world who alone can steer the U.S. in a way to serve Zionist objectives. Unlike Saddam Hussein who cannot say "no" to the U.S. even in matters related to his people's survival, the writer said, Netanyahu can mock any attempt by the U.S. to pressure Israel into complying with the requirements of peace.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Riyad Hroub said that last month government departments and public institutions were closed for half a month but nothing is done to compensate for the loss of work and production. He said the holidays of Adha, the new Muslim year, Labour Day and Easter amounted almost to half of the days of the past month. According to the writer school and university students have nothing to do in these holidays and the daily paid workers cannot earn a living during the holidays and in addition the private sector which is the key factor for the country's economy lies idle during holidays which are so many in Jordan every year. He said he opposes the two-day weekend except if they were on Saturdays and Sundays otherwise, and if the government opts for Thursdays and Fridays Jordan will be cut off from the rest of the world for four consecutive days, something which can by no means contribute to Jordan's development.

## Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

# Privatisation debate continues

PRIVATISATION CONTINUES, and rightfully so, to be a hot issue that is debated at all levels. Economic writers, among others, seem to favour many different approaches; alas, some of the debate remains incoherent and muddled (possibly due to the infusion of misinformation or the use of garbled arguments which lack in theoretical economic training). However, arguments of the antagonists of privatisation can be summarised in six main points, which are addressed herein.

"Privatisation will push public sector workers into the streets." There are several schemes and methods for nullifying this claim. Some countries have offered generous severance schemes; others have offered shares to employees; and others provided training to employees to facilitate their gainful and willful employment elsewhere. Jordan can apply a mix of these policies. In the telecommunications sector, the hub of Jordan's privatisation programme, all employees were guaranteed a no-job-loss policy during privatisation.

"Privatisation is just a method for politicians and their relatives and acquaintances to get rich at the expense of the public." Competitive bidding in the most transparent manner is of the utmost importance for the credibility of any offering whether to national or foreign investors. Announcements should be made in full view of the media and citizens. In all fairness, so far, this has been the modus operandi in the Jordanian privatisation process, particularly in the case of the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation (JTC). There is, however, a need to design and implement wide-reaching and well-studied public-awareness campaigns to resolve any ambiguities that may drive wedges between

design and implementation which could delay the privatisation programme even more. Failure to do so could easily place Jordanian stocks in a less competitive position, particularly with the growing demand, regionally and globally, for international strategic investors.

"We should not accept the handing over of our precious assets to foreigners." There are several strategies that can be used to counter this fear. In Russia and the Czech Republic, two former Communist economies, privatisation vouchers were distributed to the people. But although such drastic measures were used in former hotbeds of socialism, no such measures are needed in Jordan. In Argentina, Chile and the U.K., initial public offers were made to the citizens of each country while making room for a strategic investor, thus allaying fears while reaping the benefits from importing advanced know-how and foreign direct investment. Jordan can sell, in the case of the JTC, some shares to a strategic partner and then offer the remainder of the shares in the Amman Financial Market. This strategy would ensure that the offered shares would attract optimal prices and that knowledge with the latter being, contrary to the recent statements of some, is neither easy nor cheap to secure.

"The local private sector is too weak to operate without state enterprises." The recent market liberalisation drive in Jordan ensures that the market is capable of handling such transfers, particularly with the existence of strategic partnerships and investments. Replacing debt with investment is a win-win policy that is far superior to maintaining inefficient organisations that would burden the state and the taxpayer, either presently or in the near future.

"Privatisation will replace public

monopolies with private monopolies." This claim can be easily dealt with under the soon to be passed Antitrust Law, which is presently in an advanced drafting stage. Under the law, and given a transparent bidding process, there should be no room for private monopoly creation nor for the continuance of inefficiency in any form.

"Can't we just manage state enterprises better by having top Jordanian bureaucrats at their helms and avoid this painful remedy?" Unfortunately, the answer is no. Even with the most sincere of intents and the best of reforms, efforts by governments usually fail. Competitors simply find it unwise to compete with a government-owned incumbent. Promises of government to have a level playing field are usually not convincing enough to investors.

To win a game you must first be ensured that the referee is impartial, something which is hard to achieve when the referee decides to participate in the game. Also, according to the World Development Report 1993, the economic well-being of a majority of state firms that were reformed by their governments rather than privatised declined upon examination 10 years later. This finding renders a simple reform strategy an expensive undertaking even for the rich countries.

All the above are common criticisms of privatisation. They represent legitimate fears that policy makers and planners should address and answer. Privatisation is accepted worldwide, let us not make Jordan the exception. Those who want to argue against it should really study the issue and avoid hapless rhetoric. In the case of privatisation, the early bird catches the worm. Let us not wait too long.

## Drawing appropriate lessons from the Asia crisis

By Michel Camdessus

WASHINGTON — The financial crisis in East Asia has been very challenging, but perhaps we still face the greatest challenge of all — to draw the appropriate lessons from this experience and act on them.

Recent events have prompted a great deal of reflecting and soul-searching — both within the IMF and among the governments that are our shareholders — about what more could be done to prevent such crises, how to deal more effectively with those that arise and how, in general, we could make the fund an even more effective institution.

The primary focus of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is on sound money, prudent fiscal policies and open markets. We must maintain that emphasis because those are the prerequisites for economic growth and financial stability. Yet I believe that we must broaden the scope of our concerns to include other elements that, in a globalised world, are also important in achieving these goals.

They include creating a more level playing field for the private sector by dismantling monopolies and setting up simpler, more transparent regulatory systems; stronger banking systems that protect small depositors' savings and are freed from government intervention in the allocation of credit, so that they can channel it not just to a favoured few but to those who will use it productively, and reductions in unproductive government spending, such as costly military buildups, prestige projects and subsidies and guarantees to favoured sectors and firms.

The new elements would also include higher and more cost-effective spending on primary health care and education; adequate social protection for the poor, unemployed and other vulnerable groups; environmental protection; greater transparency and accountability in govern-

ment and corporate affairs, and a more effective dialogue with labour and the rest of civil society to increase political support for adjustment and reform, and to ensure that all segments benefit from the resumption of growth while core labour rights are protected.

The crisis in Asia has underscored the importance of these elements. Indeed, in many respects they are the bedrock of the programmes we are supporting in the region. But our concerns about

capital, we must encourage them to liberalise capital flows in a prudent and properly sequenced way that will maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of freer capital movements. Work is under way on an amendment to the IMF's charter that would make the liberalisation of capital movements one of the purposes of the fund and extend its jurisdiction to such movements.

Fourth, we must continue to pursue good governance and intensify the

*... we must continue to pursue good governance and intensify the fight against corruption. Our approach is to encourage countries to maximise the transparency of government operations and thus minimise the opportunities for special favours.*

these issues do not begin and end in Asia. We are emphasising these points in many other member countries as well because we think we can, and should, do more about them.

What about crisis prevention? This will not be an easy task, but already there are a number of good ideas on the table:

• First, we must continue to encourage countries to improve the quality of information that they make available to the IMF and the public.

• Second, we must find ways to strengthen domestic financial systems by improving domestic regulation and supervision and increasing financial sector transparency. Over the past year or so, the IMF has helped develop a set of "best practices" in the banking area, so that practices that have worked well in some countries can be adapted to and applied in others. We are now disseminating these best practices around the world through our policy dialogues with member countries.

• Third, as we push even harder for trade liberalisation, and as nations open their economies to foreign

capital, we must encourage them to liberalise capital flows in a prudent and properly sequenced way that will maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of freer capital movements. Work is under way on an amendment to the IMF's charter that would make the liberalisation of capital movements one of the purposes of the fund and extend its jurisdiction to such movements.

Fourth, we must continue to pursue good governance and intensify the

fight against corruption. Our approach is to encourage countries to maximise the transparency of government operations and thus minimise the opportunities for special favours. But we are also prepared to interrupt IMF-supported programmes on grounds of corruption (and we have already done so in a number of cases) when it threatens to have a macroeconomic dimension.

As the IMF presses its members to become more open, the question arises: Does the fund itself practice what it preaches? In recent years, we have made a major effort to provide more information to the public.

Looking ahead, I think that the crisis in Asia will be a watershed, convincing many members of the benefits of greater transparency. This will enable the fund to become more open in the future, an objective I very much support, even if we are dependent on the consent of our members.

always be right. Moreover, our warnings could provoke the very crises we are trying to prevent. It is far better for market participants to come to their own conclusions. That is why we have set up standards to guide members in releasing reliable data to the public, along with an Internet bulletin board so that the public can track the practices of individual countries.

The international community cannot realistically expect to avert every potential financial or economic crisis. So what else can be done to ensure that future trouble can be handled effectively?

Certainly, better ways need to be found to involve the private sector in official efforts to resolve debt crises and avoid the problem of moral hazard, perhaps through orderly mechanisms for settling and restructuring debts. Countries should also be encouraged to strengthen the laws and institutions covering debtor-creditor relations, including domestic insolvency laws.

In addition, we need to enhance the effectiveness of multilateral institutions, which includes, of course, ensuring that they have sufficient resources and personnel of the highest calibre to do their jobs.

The IMF cannot perform a central role in crisis prevention or management — or do its part in addressing financial problems that exceed the capacity of individual countries to resolve alone and in a way that shares the burden fairly — unless it has adequate resources.

There are still major risks in the world economy. Thus it is a matter of concern that the IMF's usable funds have dropped to a level that leaves it little room for manoeuvre to respond to a new crisis.

The writer is managing director of the International Monetary Fund.

— International Herald Tribune

## Responsibility should accompany rights

By Dr. Waleed M. Sadi

MUCH HAS been said on the projected 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a historic event that must not pass without proper commemoration. Different countries, societies, cultures and religions are thinking of different ways to mark the occasion in line with their own perspectives, priorities and needs. It is generally thought that the declaration is a Western oriented document, articulated and drafted in the image of the Western culture. The accent in the declaration, it is often stated, is on civil and political rights of individuals at the expense of other rights, notably economic, social and cultural rights. Some

lective human rights that find expression in such domains as self-determination, law and order, economic, social and cultural rights should not be sacrificed at the altar of the civil and political rights of individuals.

There are certain core or basic human rights which deserve attention ahead of others. Not all human rights are equal even though human rights are indivisible for all intents and purposes. Yet human rights come in different "sizes" and this reflects their order of importance. The right to life, for example, comes ahead of all other human rights since without life there can be no enjoyment of all other rights. Under this right comes the protection from summary and extrajudicial

*... the 50th anniversary of the declaration is not only an occasion to celebrate the advent of human rights but also an opportunity to make amends where necessary on the existing human rights order so that an equitable balance can be struck between the various categories of human rights to the satisfaction of all societies, cultures and religions.*

executions, torture and ill or inhuman treatment. The right to safe food, water, clean air, and housing certainly come next. The right to education is also a high priority human right because without it many other rights would be interfered with and violated. The right to development including the right to work and earn a substantive livelihood are also very basic human rights. The equal treatment of women is now ascending in importance due to its organic link with so many other rights that cannot be realised or enjoyed without its promotion and protection. The way we treat our children, whether at home or at school, is also a pressing human right. Child abuse and exploitation is rampant in so many societies even those which enjoy high standards of development. Any society which still suffers from child abuse in all its forms cannot claim to have attained a good human rights record. On the edge of these rights and related rights people can hope to enjoy political and civil rights including of course self-determination, freedom of expression, fair trials, election of their representatives and scores of other related rights.

The big question that remains is: Which rights come first. To put it in another way: Should one set of rights be placed in a state of limbo until the other set is realised. The U.N. system works on the assumption that civil and political rights can be put into practice immediately, whereas economic, social and cultural rights can only be progressively attained. A state need not be developed economically, it is being said, in order to prohibit torture. On the other hand, without economic development a state cannot afford to have a proper court system or sophisticated security forces that can perform their duties without resorting to duress. These postulations are now ripe for questioning in anticipation of the correct answers based on empirical evidence.

## Features

### Tell el-Fukh

SCANDINAVIAN AND American archaeologists excavating the site of Tell el-Fukh in north Jordan have uncovered the remains of a town that was settled almost continuously throughout the first 3,000 years of humankind's earliest urbanism — from the Early Bronze Age to the Hellenistic era. Tell el-Fukh is located along the Wadi Shalbala some 11 kilometres north-east of Irbid, near the important Early Bronze Age site of Khirbet Zarqun. The four seasons of excavations in 1990-1997, by a predominantly Scandinavian team headed successively by Dr. Magnus Ottosson and John Strange, have provided valuable new information about several pivotal aspects of ancient life in the region — most notably, the Late Bronze Age monumental public architecture, international trade links and cultural interaction in antiquity, and the Late Bronze/Iron and Late Iron/Hellenistic transitions. The Bronze and Iron Age pottery and glass finds are particularly important for the archaeology of Jordan and the region because they constitute "the first long-term stratified sequence from this region," says project curator Dr. Patrick McGovern, from the University of Pennsylvania (USA). The analysis of the material reveals "local industrial developments and the foreign relations of Tell el-Fukh," McGovern says.

### Rich environment

The rich environment of the site comprises the wadi, fields, rain-fed agriculture.

## Chicken-h

By Peretz Kidron

BEST JERUSALEM — "She's not taking," Benjamin Netanyahu said shrewdly. "She's on the defence." The prime minister offered his right after reading reports from U.S. and Israeli leaders on a confidential brief- ing by Madeleine Albright, where the secretary of state reportedly pressed profound "exasperation" at Israel's effective rejection of a peace proposal and sought to count her listeners to exercise their voice on Netanyahu to render him the forthcoming.

After long experience in overseeing Israel's relations with the United States, few can equal Netanyahu's dis- creet and official pronouncements emanating from Washington. In this case too, he was swift to read the ostensibly "tough" language Albright used and detect an edge of resolve on the part of the administration to put its full weight behind proposals for a "substantial" withdrawal in the West Bank. Albright, the Americans have no doubt, is on a fight with the Netanyahu government.

Coming after months of gloomy foreboding, Netanyahu's con- viction that the Americans are serious about an attempt to ram through their proposal for a hand-over of 13 per cent of West Bank territory to the Palestinian [National] Authority, U.S. proposals for reviving the peace process, are now common knowledge. Nevertheless, U.S. hesi- tance has been evident since the summer of the year in repeated pos- sibilities of their formal publica- tion. Albright's fulminated about the "impasse" over the failure of Netanyahu's renegotiating on previous attempts to gain cabinet approval for a "substantial" two-digit withdrawal — a prime minister guessed that the administration would not after all condemn Israeli intransi-

### Gamble pays off

It was a political gamble on his part, Netanyahu's assessment on this vital issue could cost him his office. The same efforts of the Labour Party, the stalled peace process and a constant barrage of domestic



## Tell el-Fukhar dig in north Jordan unearths 3,000 years of early urbanism, international trading and cultural contacts

SCANDINAVIAN AND American archaeologists excavating the site of Tell el-Fukhar in north Jordan have uncovered the remains of a town that was settled almost continuously throughout the first 3,000 years of humankind — from the Early Bronze Age to the Hellenistic era. Tell el-Fukhar ("the mound of pottery") is located alongside the Wadi Shallah some 11 kilometres north-east of Irbid, near the important Early Bronze Age site of Khirbet Zarqun. The four seasons of excavations in 1990-1993, by a predominantly Scandinavian team headed successfully by Drs. Magnus Ottosson and John Strang, have provided valuable new information about several pivotal aspects of ancient life in this region — most notably, Late Bronze Age monumental public architecture, international trade links and cultural interaction in antiquity, and the Late Bronze/Iron and Late Iron/Hellenistic transitions.

The Bronze and Iron Age pottery and glass finds are particularly important for the archaeology of Jordan and the region because they constitute "the first long-term stratified sequence from this region," says project ceramist Dr. Patrick McGovern, from the University of Pennsylvania (USA). The analysis of the materials reveals "local industrial developments and the foreign relations of Tell el-Fukhar," McGovern says.

### Rich environment

The rich environment of the site comprises the wadi waters, rain-fed agricul-

al lands and oak forests, and irrigated cultivation of olives and fruit trees. The immediate area was quite heavily settled in antiquity, and today sports the remains of Tell el-Fukhar; Khirbet Zarqun (primarily an Early Bronze Age site); and the unexcavated sites of Tell Umm er-Rigla (with surface pottery evidence of occupation from primarily the Late Bronze Age and the Late Iron Age through to the early Islamic era), and Tell el-Subba (Chalcolithic and Iron IIC-Persian pottery).

The ancient identity of Tell el-Fukhar remains unknown, though a plausible candidate is the town of Zarqu that is named in the 14th Century B.C. Amarna letters. Zarqu was located between Pella in the north Jordan Valley foothills and Ashtaroth in southern Syria.

First visited and sherded in the mid-1960s by the German scholar, Dr. Siegfried Mittmann (who later excavated Khirbet Zarqun), Tell el-Fukhar was first systematically mapped and inspected in the late 1980s-early 1990s. It revealed a large walled town dominated by an "acropolis" measuring 80 x 100 metres, with wall lines visible on the surface of the ground. The excavations showed the earliest evidence of human use of the site to be some surface pottery sherds from the Early Bronze IB period (c. 3150-3000 B.C.), which probably came from a settlement as yet unexcavated, or from people passing through the site.

More solid evidence from the next historical period, includes walls, fine stone-paved floors, basalt mortars

imbedded in a floor, and a post-hole (probably for a pillar to support a ceiling), all from the EB II-III period (c. 2900-2300 B.C.). The EB II-III pottery, such as bowls, jars, juglets, and amphoriskoi, is similar to that of all Palestine at that period. After a probable gap in the settlement during the EB IV period (2300-2000 B.C.), the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000-1500 B.C.) was represented only by some possible wall remains, sherds from cooking pots, and a burial of two skeletons accompanied by wheel-made polished ceramic vessels, probably from the early part of the MB era.

### Important Late Bronze city

The Late Bronze Age provided the most spectacular finds from Tell el-Fukhar, notably a large public building that Dr. Strang believes must be either a temple or, more probably, a palace. The town at this time was surrounded by a massive city wall on the north, with remains of a city gate to the east at the point of easiest access to the plateau.

The partial excavation of the large building showed it to be at least 25 metres long. Its 1.5-metre-thick walls were built of mud-bricks on top of stone foundations that were 1.5 metres high. Repairs to the outer walls and several thick white plaster floors indicate several phases of use for the building.

The excavated rooms were filled with some two metres of destruction materials, comprising, burnt bricks, charred oak roof beams, and other materials

that suggested the structure had two stories. The entrance at the north included an outer paved courtyard linked to the inside through a staircase with five steps.

### International trade contacts

The objects and materials found inside this large building confirmed the town's international trading contacts during the Late Bronze Age, including Greece (Mycenaean) and Cyprus. The finds comprised pottery objects such as a large collared-rim storage jar or pithos measuring over one metre high; a unique blue-green glazed pottery knob, a fragment from a blue-green glazed pottery jar or bottle, and other "heirlooms" from the previous LB I period (16th-15th Centuries B.C.); a bronze lamp; a blue-green glazed faience bottle and bowl; and a moulded glass pendant in the shape of a female figurine representing a nude, pregnant goddess (common in the Near East during the 16th-15th Centuries B.C.), that is among the earliest known moulded glass pieces in the world. Stylistic and chemical analysis of the glass pendant and the glazed ceramic and faience items suggest a source in northern Mesopotamia, McGovern says.

Below the courtyard of the building was found a small fragment of a crucible or furnace, with remains of what seems to be reworked copper slag. Whether and when such metal smelting took place here, and for what purposes, remains to be determined.

The large building was destroyed in the 13th Century B.C., at the end of the Late Bronze Age, but it continued to be used in the Iron Age — and thus it provides valuable insights into the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Ages in this region.

### The Iron Age town

The ruins of the large Late Bronze building were temporarily occupied at first, but later in the Early Iron Age the site was rebuilt into a more permanent settlement. The town wall along the north was rebuilt in the Late Bronze Age-Iron I transition, and the remains of Early Iron Age houses were found built up against the wall. Among the Early Iron Age excavated remains were ovens made from recycled collar-rim jars: the bases of the large jars were cut off, the necks of the upside-down vessels were inserted into the ground, and a stoking hole was made by breaking off part of the side wall.

An imported Philistine pottery sherd in the Iron Age level indicated that the occupation of the site "continued into the Late Iron IB period," Dr. Strang said. The evidence of contacts with Gaza also sheds new light on regional trading links in this period.

The site seems to have been temporarily abandoned after the Iron I period, perhaps for some 400 years, for the excavations showed no signs of human use until the Iron IIC-Persian period (c. 650-350 B.C.). The evidence from this period includes building remains, and more than 20 deep, stone-lined silos

or bins for storage of grain and other foodstuffs (though all were found empty and did not indicate their original contents). The pottery from this period is "remarkably similar to that found in the Amman region," McGovern notes, but imported items included pottery from Cyprus and Phoenicia.

The little known transition from the Late Iron IIC-Persian to the Hellenistic period is also well documented at Tell el-Fukhar. From the Hellenistic period (starting c. 332 B.C.) the site shows the remains of a fine villa comprising 16 rooms arranged around a central courtyard; in some places the remains of Late Iron-Persian walls served as foundations for the Hellenistic structure. The building is well dated by the pottery remains, which include locally produced Hellenistic shapes that derive from Iron IIC-Persian pottery, and fine Hellenistic tableware from the 3rd Century B.C. One copper coin found embedded in the floor of a room was inscribed "PTOLEMAIOS BASILEUS," which dates it to the reigns of either Ptolemy III (246-221 B.C.) or Ptolemy IV Philopater (221-203 B.C.).

The substantial pottery from this period will help to develop a more firm chronology for ceramics during the Iron IIC-Persian-to-Hellenistic transition, Dr. Strang said. This in turn could help to better date other structures and settlements in Jordan from the Ptolemaic era, which is poorly documented throughout the country.

After the Hellenistic period, the site of Tell el-Fukhar was never again used for a permanent settle-

ment, hosting only the occasional squatter or the itinerant nomad, some of whom buried their dead there. The most recent noteworthy historical episode, according to local accounts recounted to Dr. Strang, was a battle in 1932 fought between local residents from Ramtha and bedouins from the outlying areas.

One of the most important findings of the neuron activation and petrographic analysis of the pottery at Tell el-Fukhar has been that most of the pottery during every major historical period was manufactured in the vicinity of the site, using alluvial clay deposits in the adjacent Wadi el-Shallah.

### Pottery from south Palestine

The single most important source of imported pottery from the Middle Bronze IIA through the entire Iron Age periods was southern Palestine — from Gaza to Asqalon — though nothing from this region appeared to have reached this north Jordan settlement in the preceding EB II-III periods. The scholars studying the materials are now trying to determine if the south Palestine pottery was exported to north Jordan as empty vessels, reached there loaded with exports, was brought by travellers who left it behind, or came with people from south Palestine who moved permanently to Tell el-Fukhar.

Other sources of pottery imports include Affuleh



town in the Jezreel Valley in north Palestine, the Baq'ah Valley north of Amman, the Nile Valley in Egypt, eastern Cyprus, Rhodes, Mycenae in central Greece, and probably the Cilician plain in south Anatolia.

This kind of integration of ancient north Jordan into the wider Middle East shows that Tell el-Fukhar maintained long-range regional trading contacts with key centres of civilisation in the region, including Egypt, Greece, Palestine, Cyprus, and probably south Anatolia — and perhaps shared in their prosperity as they enjoyed economic expansion. This is a very different picture from the relatively isolated, sparsely inhabited site today.

The fieldwork at Tell el-Fukhar has been completed for the moment, in order to concentrate on analysis and publication of the materials. The work was financed mainly by the Nordic Research Council (NOS-H) and H.P. Hjerf-Hansen Mindefondet for Dansk Palaestinaforskning, with support from the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, Yarmouk University, Uppsala University (Sweden), the University of Copenhagen, Ramboell, Hanne-mann and Hoejgaard, Ltd., Danmarks Nationalbank, the Theological Faculty of Copenhagen, Consul-General Einar Høeysvalds Fond, and J.L.-Fondet.

## Chicken-hearted America: betrayal of the forces of peace

By Peretz Kidron

WEST JERUSALEM — "She's not attacking," Benjamin Netanyahu noted shrewdly, "she's on the defensive." The prime minister offered his insight after reading reports from U.S. Jewish leaders on a confidential briefing from Madeleine Albright, where the secretary of state reportedly expressed profound "exasperation" with Israel's effective rejection of U.S. peace proposals and sought to recruit her listeners to exercise their influence on Netanyahu to render him more forthcoming.

After long experience in overseeing Israel's relations with the United States, few can equal Netanyahu's discernment regarding the undertones behind official pronouncements emanating from Washington. In this instance too, he was swift to read through the ostensibly "tough" language Albright used and detect an absence of resolve on the part of the Clinton administration to put its full weight behind proposals for a "substantial" withdrawal in the West Bank. In a nutshell, the Americans have no stomach for a fight with the Netanyahu government.

Coming after months of gloomy predictions of an "inevitable" confrontation with the U.S., Netanyahu is now convinced that the Americans will stop short of an attempt to ram through their proposal for a hand-over of 13.1 per cent of West Bank territory to the Palestinian [National] Authority. U.S. proposals for reviving the peace process are now common knowledge; nevertheless, U.S. hesitancy has been evident since the beginning of the year in repeated postponements of their formal publication. While Albright fulminated about her "impatience" over the failure of the parties to make the tough decisions — her code term for Netanyahu's reneging on previous pledges to gain cabinet approval for a "substantial" two-digit withdrawal — the prime minister guessed that the administration would not after all publicly condemn Israeli intransigence.

### Gamble pays off

It was a political gamble on his part, for a mistaken assessment on this vital point could cost him his office, through defection of supporters rather than the lame efforts of the Labour opposition. The stalled peace process evokes a constant barrage of domestic

criticism, Labour and the other opposition parties drawing powerful support from the non-party Council for Peace and Security, a dovish association embracing hundreds of retired senior officers from the army, police and security services.

In a full-page advertisement bearing several hundred signatures of reserve officers ranking from major to general, the council proclaimed that "peace with the Palestinians is vital for Israel's security, and should not be foregone in an argument over percentages." The statement expressly supported a withdrawal of "10-13 per cent" that would renew the peace process "without harm to Israeli security." Warning that "the window of opportunity is closing," the signatories urged the government to act "without further delay" to achieve a peace settlement. Without confidence-building steps, the statement concludes, an "imposed settlement is inevitable."

Under normal circumstances, a declaration from such a prestigious body should have a major impact on the controversy over the American proposals, strongly reinforcing opposition calls for efforts towards an understanding with the Palestinians. But Netanyahu seems to reckon that such opinions — however authoritative — exercise no major bearing on the political balance. Contrary to a widespread view, Israelis no longer set their generals on a pedestal. In the paranoid climate Netanyahu deliberately fosters, the considered collective opinion of Israel's foremost military experts carries little weight with an inflamed public opinion.

Netanyahu's brash self-confidence that he can see through the American bluff even makes him willing to risk disagreements with moderate sections of his own coalition, as evidenced by his apparent indifference to stern warnings from the small Third Way Party. A delegation headed by Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani warned the prime minister that the party would not remain in a government "that is only interested in biding time" in relation to the peace process. The delegation also advised against fobbing the Palestinians off with worthless concessions in uninhabited areas. Third Way's platform stresses "separation between us and the Palestinians," requiring withdrawal from densely populated areas where friction is highest. But four successive meetings failed to sway the prime minister to bow to Third Way

demands, prompting the rather watery ultimatum.

It seems reckless on Netanyahu's part to ignore the Third Way threat. With only four Knesset members, the party's defection would not demolish his parliamentary majority. But such a pull-out would be a serious blow to the government's prestige and could — in theory at least — prompt other cabinet moderates, most notably Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, to implement long-standing threats to resign if Netanyahu continues to sabotage the peace process. But, as illustrated by the hollowness of Mordechai's threat — the three-month deadline the defence minister publicly set has meanwhile passed without any sign of an imminent walk-out — Netanyahu knows that he can ignore such political breast-beating as long as he can get away with his stalling tactics without incurring effective U.S. sanctions.

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The prime minister is free to overlook parliamentary arithmetic as long as he is convinced that the pragmatists will not go through with their threats in the present public climate of indifference to the fate of the peace process. And Netanyahu is secure in the knowledge that, in the absence of clear and immediate proof that his policy places Israel in clear and immediate jeopardy, public opinion will not turn against him.

A junior minister in the Shamir government that held office in the late 1980s, Netanyahu can draw on that experience: in spite of enduring worldwide censure for its handling of the Palestinian intifada, the Likud-led coalition managed to cling to power till the end of its term. Only when it became evident that Shamir's foot-dragging at the Madrid peace conference was invoking immediate and tangible sanctions — in the form of U.S. refusal to grant \$10 billion in loan guarantees that Israel urgently needed

— did the political balance in the 1992 elections shift sufficiently to grant a narrow victory to Labour.

The pragmatic segments of the body politic — whether represented by a "centrist" party like the Third Way or corresponding sections of public opinion — have long been taught to discount frowns of censure from Washington as long as they were not backed up by tangible pressure. After the 1956 Sinai war, Prime Minister Ben Gurion ignored votes of censure from the United Nations and seemed set on retaining Israel's conquests until an outraged President Eisenhower joined the Soviets in delivering a clear ultimatum, whereupon no time was lost in pulling the IDF back across the border. In the early '70s, Golda Meir publicly scorned American peace plans, and it was only after the 1973 war, and the subsequent halt of U.S. military aid under the "reevaluation" proclaimed by President Ford,

process, are evidently not averse to some arm-twisting by the administration to squeeze the necessary concessions from Netanyahu. But the Clinton administration and Congress seem to be overawed by the shrill outcry of the hawkish right-wing minority among U.S. Jews.

### Winning either way

Netanyahu is following an "either-or" strategy, designed principally to safeguard his coalition majority. If his delaying tactics prove successful and the Americans back down from their proposal, his proven ability to "get away with it" will allow him to carry the Third Way and other waverers with him. Conversely, should the administration nevertheless prove insistent, his long and skilful defence will enable him to convince Greater Israel hardliners that some minimal concessions have to be offered. Either way, he has his coalition flanks securely covered. As he told an Italian interviewer in early April, if he is convinced that the American proposals "do not threaten our security, the coalition parties will accept them, because they know that I will never jeopardise security." With stunning self-confidence, he declared that he will "make peace with the Palestinians and all our neighbours," claiming that he alone is capable of doing so.

A similar "heads I win tails you lose" strategy is evident in the prime minister's unexpected initiative for a withdrawal from the "security zone" in southern Lebanon. In a surprise move designed equally to silence domestic criticism of the heavy toll taken by the unending clashes with Hizbollah and offer the Americans a sop whereby they can continue to believe in his peaceful intentions, the prime minister procured unanimous cabinet approval for acceptance of Security Council Resolution 425, passed in March 1978. But endorse-

ment of a 20-year-old call for an unconditional withdrawal from Lebanese territory was tagged with conditions designed to make the initiative unacceptable, by requiring Lebanon to take responsibility for border security but without a concomitant peace treaty between the two countries.

Here too, Netanyahu hopes to gain either way. If, by some miracle, he can induce the Lebanese government to go along with his conditions, he would draw it into a rift with the Syrians, leaving Damascus isolated. If, as indeed occurred, his initiative is turned down firmly by both Lebanon and Syria, Israel scores a propaganda victory by proving its own peaceful intentions while showing up "Arab intransigence." Incidentally, he also accumulates ammunition to answer the growing ground swell of domestic discontent over Israel's involvement in Lebanon, as voiced by the grassroots "Four Mothers" movement and other groups calling for immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the quaintly-named "security zone."

There is nothing new in Netanyahu's tactics, which are close replicas of techniques used by previous Israeli governments in their relations with the U.S. In view of the imbalance between the two "strategic allies," it is hardly surprising that the Israeli junior partner uses wiles and ruses to offset its weakness in relation to its heavyweight ally.

But the Americans show an astounding willingness to be taken in time and time again. It must be evident by now to the Clinton administration that it has the ability to punish Netanyahu's intransigence by demolishing his power-base. As Yitzhak Shamir learned to his cost, it would need little more than a few tangible signs of Washington's displeasure to isolate the hardliners and either create irresistible domestic pressure for a saner policy or bring down the present government and force early elections that would have the same outcome.

By proving too chicken-hearted to confront Netanyahu, the administration is abandoning and betraying potential allies awaiting no more than a sign from Washington to translate their vague threats into a concrete ultimatum that the prime minister would defy at his peril. Clinton's failure to give that signal amounts to an outright betrayal of the forces of peace, in Israel and throughout the region.



# Business

Mr. Sharansky is on a private two-day visit to Petra with his family.

...and the



## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Arab Jordan Investment Bank rewards shareholders with a 10% cash dividend despite lower net profit

**\*\* DESPITE POSTING** a lower net profit last year, the Arab Jordan Investment Bank is distributing JD1 million in cash dividends following the general assembly approval to reward shareholders with a 10 per cent return on their investment. The gross profit of the bank before allocations amounted to JD2,998,365 in 1997 compared to JD2,955,027 in 1996.

General Manager Hani Al Qadi told the general assembly that the bank's assets grew by 11.75 per cent reaching JD250.02 million at the end of last year. Net credit facilities extended totalled JD64.03 million, about JD1.5 million less than the JD65.55 million credits outstanding at the end of 1996. Mr. Qadi said, noting that the increase in credit facilities in all the banking sector was generally around 1.5 per cent.

Other figures highlighted by the general manager were the cash on hand and at banks, the securities portfolio and the clients' deposits. The cash figure stood at JD163.89 million (JD137.24 million in 1996) and the total value of the securities portfolio was JD14.22 million. Deposits of clients increased by 4.75 per cent to reach JD147.71 million at the end of last year.

Mr. Qadi indicated that the bank's total earnings amounted to JD19.19 million in 1997 compared to JD17.35 million in 1996. "Interest payable accounted for 85 per cent of the total earnings," he said.

The general manager mentioned two main events that took place last year. The first was the increase of capital from JD10 million to JD20 million by capitalising JD5 million of reserves and floating five million shares for the shareholders' private subscription.

The second main activity mentioned by Mr. Qadi was the issuance of certificates of deposit, worth \$8 million, which were floated in international financial markets. "Being the first of its kind to Jordan, the issuance was positively received in the market as the certificates were bought by foreign, Arab and international banks," he said.

The general manager also told the shareholders that the bank has expanded the scope of financing small projects, in cooperation with the Jordan Loan Guarantee Company, and has established a specialised department to finance car purchases by instalment. "The bank plans to expand its activity in this specialised financing," he said.

He concluded by pointing out that the bank will set up an international investment fund specialised in investing in local or international Jordanian bonds and securities. He also affirmed the intention and the necessity to transform the bank into a comprehensive bank to provide all banking services (Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

## Dahabi describes RJ '97 results as 'the worst since the slump associated with the Gulf war'

By Ghaila Alul  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The debt-ridden Royal Jordanian (RJ) Sunday reported an "unsatisfactory" one per cent increase in total revenue last year, mainly because of continued political tension in the region and a drop in demand on Far Eastern routes caused by the Asian economic crisis.

Addressing the 34th marketing and sales conference, RJ President and Chief Executive Officer Nader Dahabi described the 1997 results as "the worst since the slump associated with the Gulf war." He said that they have dampened what started out as a promising year.

Mr. Dahabi added that "the overall result for 1997 is estimated to come to an operating profit of \$12 million, recording a healthy increase over 1996 operating profits of \$3.6 million."

In 1997, passenger traffic increased by 4.2 per cent over 1996, and total cargo showed a negative growth of 3.3 per cent mainly because freight aircraft were reduced from three to two, said Mr. Dahabi.

RJ, saddled with debts of over \$846 million mainly from aircraft leases, has forecast flat revenue growth for 1998 as passenger revenue is expected to rise a modest one per cent and cargo traffic revenue is expected to drop by 10 per cent because of the termination of a lease on a third B707 freighter.

Downsizing the current route network would help RJ restore its financial health, said Mr. Dahabi.

"Royal Jordanian will redefine its operating priorities and establish its route network around a nucleus of profitable routes where we can achieve sustainable

competitive advantage," he said.

Mr. Dahabi added that after reviewing the airline's cost structure, a total actual reduction of \$8,867,000 was achieved in 1997 without affecting the performance or the level of service.

"Cost-saving will remain an ongoing task for RJ management. We will be looking at all aspects of the organisation on the basis that an effectively-run organisation has lower costs," he said.

RJ has last year closed its Singapore and Canadian routes, part of moves to cut costs and focus on profitable stations to enhance the airline's financial position.

RJ's vice president for commercial affairs, Majdi Sabri, said despite the pressure confronting the national air carrier, it managed to sustain a profitable operation to the Far East and reduce operating cost during the low season to maintain a reasonable operating result.

He added that RJ has also increased its charter revenue in 1997 by 27.6 per cent and reduced manpower of its commercial department by 10 per cent.

RJ has decided to strengthen its regional network by increasing the present frequency to Kuwait from two weekly flights in 1997 to three in 1998, Dr. Sabri said, adding that as of mid-June RJ will resume direct flights to Tehran after an 18-year suspension in order to encourage religious tourism.

Jordan and Kuwait resumed direct flights last July for the first time since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

In his opening address, RJ Board Chairman Walid Asfour said the national carrier hopes to complete a five-phase privatisation programme by 1999.

Last year, the cabinet approved plans for a major financial and legal restructuring of the airline — an important step to sell a stake to a global strategic investor.

The financial and legal restructuring of RJ will help put it on a more profitable and a sounder administrative level before it can operate on commercial basis.

Mr. Asfour said a subsidiary company will be established to take responsibility of all airline core functions.

The mother airline, he added, will become a holding company, responsible for all other non-core business units.

Plans to privatise the airline were first floated in 1988 but held back due to a host of bureaucratic and financial reasons.

### Japan-Arab Gulf trade rises to \$41.3b in 1997

DUBAI (R) — Trade between Japan and Arab Gulf states rose by 9.9 per cent in 1997 to \$41.3 billion, the highest level since 1982, official figures have showed.

The Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) said trade between Japan and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states increased from \$37.5 billion in 1996.

The GCC groups Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman.

"In 1997, the strong exchange rate of GCC currencies against the yen boosted Japanese exports to GCC countries. An increased intake of crude oil and petroleum gas from the GCC countries pushed up the Japanese purchase bill from the region," JETRO said in a statement.

Japan boosted its exports to the Arab Gulf states by nine per cent to \$7.9 billion in 1997 from \$7.3 billion in 1996, selling motor vehicles, general machinery, electrical machinery and other goods.

GCC states sold \$33.4 billion in goods to Japan in 1997, up from \$30.3 billion in 1996.

Saudi Arabia was Japan's leading trade partner among the GCC states with a share of 36.4 per cent, followed by the UAE with 36.1 per cent.

Japan's crude imports from the Arab Gulf states grew by 8.2 per cent to \$24.9 billion from \$23 billion in 1996.

JETRO said the import of crude constituted 75 per cent of the total Japanese imports from GCC states. Japan imported about 72 per cent of its crude oil from Arab Gulf states in 1997, it said.

Imports of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) soared by 17.9 per cent to \$3.3 billion and constituted 81 per cent of total Japanese LPG imports.

## Proposed Kuwaiti law could postpone new investment abroad — report

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait is proposing a law that could postpone injection of fresh cash into the Gulf oil nation's fund for investment abroad, according to a draft measure obtained by Reuters Sunday.

A decree from the emir has been forwarded to Kuwait's parliament for approval. It calls for introducing a clause to the law regulating injection of funds into a foreign investment nest egg.

Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the state investment arm, runs a foreign investment fund valued at more than \$45 billion. By law, 10 per cent of total state income is deposited with KIA, which invests it abroad.

According to the new law, the government proposes to withhold injection of new funds into the foreign portfolio in fiscal years which record budget deficits.

But the state would be obliged to reinject the allocated 10 per cent, and any funds withdrawn to cover budget deficits, in years of surplus.

In January, Kuwait said it had injected 439.1 million dinars (\$1.44 billion) of the 1996/97 budget surplus of 502.3 million dinars into the KIA-managed fund.

A 4.21 billion dinar 1996/97 (June-July) budget projected a net deficit of 1.21 billion dinars but a surplus was recorded for the first time in 15 years, mainly due to higher world oil prices and a cut in spending.

Parliament approved a 4.378 billion dinar budget for 1997/98 with a projected net deficit of 1.274 billion dinars.

Kuwait saw its foreign holdings shrink to about \$35 billion from over \$100 billion, drawing funds from the KIA-run nest egg to pay for the 1991 Gulf war and related reconstruction after Iraq's seven-month occupation was ended by a multinational military alliance.

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Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7843	0.6002	1.4915	133.20	1.4311	1788.95	2.0082	5.9745
DE Mark	0.5604	-	0.3361	0.8389	74.84	0.8018	985.52	1.1260	3.2479
GB Sterling	1.6680	2.9735	-	2.4848	221.96	2.3842	2930.41	3.2473	9.9535
CH Franc	0.6705	1.1856	0.4019	-	89.27	0.9589	1178.53	134.82	4.0030
JP Yen	0.0075	1.3391	0.4502	1.1183	-	1.0740	13.20	180.78	4.4837
CA Dollar	0.6888	1.2816	0.4225	1.0555	1.07	-	1270.80	1.4581	4.3255
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0136	0.3408	0.8848	1322.40	0.8132	-	11.42	3.3947
NL Guilder	0.4977	88.78	0.2885	74.23	86.25	0.7121	576.23	-	2.9726
FR Franc	0.1674	0.2386	0.1004	0.24903	22.27	0.2395	33.62	33.6200	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7503	0.3770	3.6398	0.3095	3.6727	1615.26	3.4026
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2886	0.5317	5.1337	0.4308	5.1801	2137.17	4.7990
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1891	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0814	0.98	404.03	0.9073
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.9477	-	9.65	0.8102	9.74	4019.23	9.0252
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0839	1.01	416.30	0.9348
Kuwait Dinar	3.2739	2.3212	12.2780	1.2342	11.92	-	12.02	4980.71	0.9348
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	1.0206	0.9910	0.0832	-	412.57	0.9284
Lebanese/1000	0.68	0.4879	2.4750	0.2485	2.4021	0.2016	2.4238	-	2.2455
Egyptian	0.2539	0.2084	1.1022	0.1108	1.0687	0.0888	1.0794	445.33	-

Energy				Mid-East Currencies				
Oil	Last	Review		Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
Brent	14.67	13.88		SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4769	0.16006	0.39796
WTI	16.21	15.82		AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48896	0.16345	0.40637
Bonny	14.67	13.88		KW Dinar	3.2738	5.84454	1.96502	4.8982
Dubai	12.90	12.46		BH Dinar	0.3770	4.73485	1.6921	3.95883
UL Gas	158.00	156.00		CY Pound	1.8988	3.3823	1.1371	2.9273

Metal Prices			Libor Fixing				
Metal	Bid	Offer	Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-1-
Gold (oz's)	302.45	302.95	Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Year
Silver (oz's)	6.13	6.16	USD	5.9841	5.7422	5.8359	5.9609
Platinum (oz's)	393.5	395.5	GBP	7.3802	7.4427	7.4427	7.3958
AL (3 Months)	1435	1438	JPY	0.6354	0.6979	0.7292	0.7900
CU (3 Months)	1670	1674	DEM	3.6875	3.8228	3.9271	4.1146
Zinc (3 Months)	1108	1112	FRF	3.5449	1.8979	1.8223	2.0104
Lead (3 Months)	559	561	CHF	1.5729	3.6563	3.7559	3.9883
NI (3 Months)	5600	5620	ITL	5.4190	5.1410	4.8210	-

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	6147.07	83.7	0.82	6147.82	6066.61	9063.37		
New York	S&P 500	1121	9.25	0.83	1121.02	1111.75	1111.75		
London	FT-SE 100	6010.3	82	1.38	6025.1	5932.7	5928.3		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	15691.1	-40.16	-0.26	15668.8	15493.5	15641.3		
Paris	CAC 40	3880.82	146.98	3.94	3891.11	3732.55	3733.93		
Frankfurt	DAX	5107.44	-1.04	-0.02	5115.88	5091.54	5108.48		

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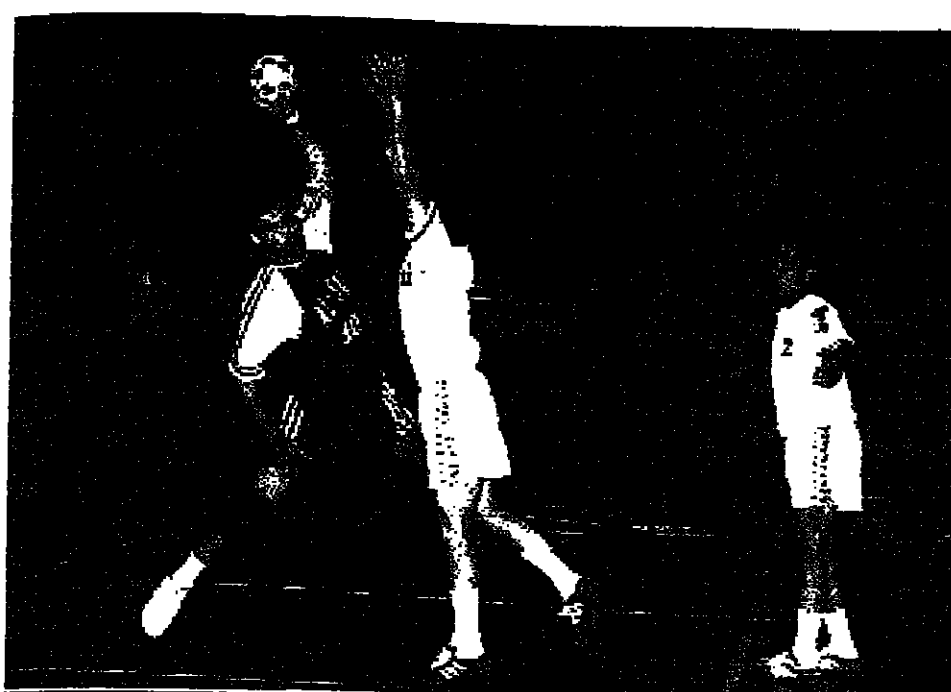
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Al Salt's Qa'ed Daradkeh goes up for a shot against Al Ahli's defence in the Cup Winner's Cup (photo by Abdullah Ayyoub)

## Ahli beat Salt in OT to win handball's Cup Winners' Cup

By Roufan Nahhas and Khaled Harb  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN— Handball League Champions Al Ahli regained the Cup Winners' Cup title after beating Jordan Cup Champions Al Salt 34-32 in overtime Saturday marking the beginning of the 1998 season.

Al Ahli fought bravely all through the match without their injured captain Mohammed Taha.

Ismael Bani Hani and Samer Hamarsheh were the winning ticket for the team who pressured their opponents in the first half ending it with a 15-9 lead.

Meanwhile, Al Salt seemed to lose their concentration and lost possession many times, while their attacks were stopped by Al Ahli's solid defence.

A dramatic second half for Al Ahli could have ended the match without resorting to overtime.

Al Ahli took advantage of Al Salt's scattered defence before the latter awoke and started to battle Al Ahli's defence.

The last minute witnessed Al Salt's determination to stay in contention with one point needed for a tie at 28-27.

With seconds to go, Al Salt's Iraqi player Amar Abed Al Jabar scored taking the match into overtime.

The two teams gave it all they had in the overtime with Al Ahli concentrating more on defence.

Al Salt thus conceded the title back to Al Ahli who won 34-32.

## PSG too strong for Lens

PARIS (AFP) — Paris Saint Germain proved too strong for Lens in the French Cup final on Saturday as goals in either half from Brazilian skipper Rai and Marco Simone saw off the league leaders in a 2-1 win.

Vladimir Smicer's 83rd-minute reply set up a barnstorming finish, with Smicer going close again only to be foiled by a fine block from point blank range by PSG keeper Vincent Fernandez.

It was a cruel blow to Lens, who are on the verge of glory in the league which they can wrap up next week, but who had been set to claim an historic double after never having previously won any major honours in their 92-year history.

In the event, after a bright start at the Stade de France, where Fernandez saved PSG's skins with brilliant stops from Michael Debeve on 16 minutes and then the effervescent Smicer, Lens saw their dreams swim out of focus.

And it was trans-Atlantic globetrotter Rai who finally broke the deadlock in the 25th minute to set PSG on the way to their fifth triumph in the competition.

Rai had been expected to start on the bench having only arrived back in France on Friday having played in Brazil's home defeat by Argentina on Wednesday in Rio.

Florian Maurice, recently linked with Marseille, whipped over a looping cross from the right and Rai, who is returning to Sao Paulo at the end of the season, leaped like a salmon to flick a majestic header into the far corner.

That sparked the Parisians and they began to knock the ball around with increasing confidence.

Lens did try manfully to force their way back and Didier Domi was booked for climbing all over the dangerous Smicer, who then headed well over.

Marc Vivien Foe, wanted by Manchester United, also strove to push his teammates forward but Lens appeared to have lost their self-belief.

After the break, it was PSG who were able to step up yet another gear and Simone skated through the left channel into the box on 53 minutes to drill home a killer second goal which visibly broke Lens' spirits.

Smicer pulled one back from close range in the 83rd minute and then ran into the brick wall of Fernandez with a final chance at the end of a mazy run down the right, but time was already running out on him and his teammates.

Paris Saint Germain thus gave outgoing Brazilian coach Ricardo a domestic cup double as they beat Bordeaux to lift the league cup.

And it was a fitting end to the reign of PSG's outgoing chief Michel Denisot, who hands the presidential reins to Charles Bierry, the current head of French satellite station Canal Plus, at the end of the season having won a league title, two French Cups, two League Cups and a European Cup Winners' Cup in his seven years in charge.

## Graf withdraws from French Open, sees end of career approaching

HAMBURG (AP) — After pulling out of the upcoming three big tennis tournaments, Steffi Graf says she could be approaching the end of her illustrious career.

The former No. 1 in the world withdrew over the weekend from the Italian, German and French Opens, the three major events of the clay-court season, because of an ankle injury suffered in practice.

"I've come to the point where I can see clearly the end of my career because I have the feeling that I am not making any progress," Graf was quoted as saying in an interview with the German magazine Focus.

"I will prepare carefully for the next attempt. But if I can't establish any continuity in my practice or tournament schedule, I will give up," she was quoted as saying.

"I've had enough of turning in circles," Graf said.

The magazine, which comes out Monday, was made available to the media on Sunday.

Graf's latest medical problem is peritonitis, an inflammation of the membrane covering the bone in her right ankle.

"I've been going up and down constantly for the past two years," she said. "Every time I struggle to reach my old form after an injury, another injury throws me back into the role of a patient."

"I can't let my life be governed by therapies and treatments. There can't be any new injuries," Graf said.

Graf had been sidelined since March with a left hamstring injury suffered during a semifinal match against Lindsay Davenport at Indian Wells.

That was just Graf's second tournament in nine months. The German, who has dominated women's tennis over the past decade, has been attempting a comeback since undergoing reconstructive surgery on her left knee after last year's French Open.

Graf said her dream was to "play once more a good tournament in Wimbledon, eat a bowl of strawberries and then say adieu to tennis."

Graf has won 103 titles, 21 of them Grand Slams. She's won Wimbledon seven times, five times each the French and U.S. Opens, and four times the Australian Open.

The German held the No. 1 ranking for 377 weeks, longer than any other player.

In 1988, she completed a rare Grand Slam by winning titles at all four major tournaments and then made it a golden Slam by adding the Olympic gold medal in Seoul, South Korea.

Her last tournament victory was in May 1997 in Strasbourg, France.

Graf has slipped to No. 33 in the world rankings. The top spot is now held by Martina Hingis, the 17-year-old Swiss prodigy.

The latest blow to Graf's comeback hopes came in a week in which she had some rare good news — her father and former manager Peter was released from prison after serving part of his tax evasion sentence.

The German Tennis Federation is reportedly ready to offer Graf several job possibilities, including the post of Fed Cup chief. But Graf told Focus she may prefer to work with junior players.

Together with Boris Becker, Graf triggered a tennis boom in Germany in the past decade. Becker, now a part-time player, is the country's Davis Cup team chief.

## Seattle advance in 5th game

SEATTLE (AFP) — The experience of Gary Payton and the Seattle SuperSonics was too much for the exuberance of Kevin Garnett, Stephon Marbury and the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Again pushed to a decisive fifth game in their National Basketball Association first-round series, the SuperSonics overcame an early 12-point deficit and blew past the Timberwolves 97-84 to reach the Western Conference semi-finals.

Payton scored 29 points, including 11 in the third quarter, when the Sonics took the lead for good. With his team again on the verge of early elimination, the All-Star guard showed leadership and poise that the young Timberwolves could not match.

Garnett and Marbury scored just seven points apiece. Appearing emotionally drained, Garnett was held scoreless in the second half and committed 10 turnovers overall. Marbury again could not solve the defence of Hersey Hawkins, shooting just 2-of-10 from the field.

Hawkins scored 24 points, including his own three-point barrage to open the second half and give Seattle control. He added nine points in the fourth quarter, when the Sonics made all 12 of their free throws and finally put away the pesky Timberwolves.



Seattle SuperSonics Detlef Schrempf (R) looks to call time as he tries to retain possession of a loose ball while Minnesota Timberwolves Kevin Garnett (L) tries to take away the ball, during their NBA playoff game at the Key Arena. The Sonics' 97-84 win over the Timberwolves in the best-of-five series clinches their berth for a second round playoff series against the Los Angeles Lakers (Reuters photo)

In the next round, the Sonics will face the Los Angeles Lakers, a best-of-seven series that starts on Monday.

The Chicago Bulls launch the second round on Sunday, when they open their best-of-seven Eastern Conference semi-final series against Charlotte.

Charlotte advanced to the conference semi-finals for the first time in five years on Friday with a 3-1 series victory over Atlanta.

The Bulls, seeking their sixth title in eight years and perhaps the last of superstar Michael Jordan's career, were the only team to sweep their first round series 3-0 — against the New Jersey Nets.

Two first-round series will also be completed on Sunday, one in the East and one in the West.

The Utah Jazz, trying to get back to the NBA Finals for the second year in a row, host the Houston Rockets in Salt Lake City.

The Jazz, the top seeds in the Western Conference, clawed their way back to 2-2 with a win in Houston on Friday.

As well as home court advantage, the Jazz will benefit from the absence of Houston star forward Charles Barkley, who suffered a torn triceps muscle in the Game Four defeat.

Before the injury, Barkley scored eight points in nine minutes, helping the Rockets to a 28-18 lead. But Houston was a different team without him, managing just 43 points as it tied the worst offensive playoff performance in franchise history.

The Miami Heat and New

York Knicks square off in Miami, both teams stung by suspensions in the wake of the silly slug-fest that broke out at the end of Game Four in New York on Thursday.

Miami center Alonzo Mourning and New York forward Larry Johnson were both banned for two games after swinging — ineffectually — at each other with just 1.4 seconds left in Thursday's game.

New York will also be without forward Chris Mills, who was suspended one game for coming off the bench during the incident.

The debacle is almost a carbon copy of last year's postseason meeting between these teams, when a bench-clearing brawl in Game Five of their Eastern Conference semifinals series led to multiple suspensions for the Knicks.

## SCOREBOARD

## Sampras to face Stoltenberg in AT&T Challenge final

DULUTH, Georgia (AP) — Top seed Pete Sampras cruised into the final of the \$315,000 AT and T Challenge with a 7-6 (8-6), 6-3 victory over Alex Calatrava of Spain.

The World's No. 1 player, seeking just his third career title on clay, will meet second seed Jason Stoltenberg of Australia in Sunday's championship match.

Stoltenberg, a finalist here last year, was a 6-2, 6-4 winner over Romania's Andrei Pavel on Saturday. Sampras' solid and aggressive play Saturday contrasted sharply with his matches earlier this week, when he struggled to find rhythm on his serves and groundstrokes in cold, damp conditions.

On a court finally dried after days of rain and clouds, however, the first set played like a serving duel. The lanky Calatrava, who battled through three qualifying matches and three in the main draw, served seven aces while Sampras countered with eight.

After neither player dropped serve, Sampras roared to a 4-0 lead in the tiebreaker. Calatrava battled to 5-all and then saved a set point at 5-6 when Sampras' backhand flew deep. The Spaniard's miss on an easy forehand on the next point, however, gave Sampras another set point at 7-6 and he won the set with a serve-and-volley point.

The second set featured more baseline rallies. Sampras, looking ever more confident, played more consistently to force Calatrava into mistakes. Sampras broke the Spaniard in the fourth game to go up 3-1 and nearly broke serve again for the

match at 5-2. Stoltenberg, a top 100 player for eight of his 13 years on tour, came up with more solutions than Pavel to strong, swirling wind.

Playing calmly while trying to get to the net as often as possible, Stoltenberg broke the 24-year-old Pavel to take a 4-2 lead in the first set, then broke again in the eighth game to take the set. Stoltenberg broke in the fourth game of the second set to lead 3-1 and was serving for the match at 5-3. Pavel broke serve, only to lose his own in the next game.

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## Gore, Mubarak appeal for success at London meetings

CAIRO (AFP) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak appealed on Sunday for the success of U.S.-sponsored Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in London.

"We in the United States believe very strongly that a successful conclusion to talks in London tomorrow... will be very much in the best interest of Israel, the Palestinians and the region as a whole," Mr. Gore told reporters.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is scheduled to meet separately in London on Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Gore, speaking after talks with Mr. Mubarak, stressed that successful London talks "would provide a wonderful springboard to see renewed progress" on the Syrian-Lebanon peace track with Israel which has been stuck since 1996.

And he agreed with Mr. Mubarak that Israeli and Palestinian negotiators should seize this "strategic, extraordinary opportunity" or face the consequences.

"The stage is set for progress in these discussions that would have significant leverage over the future of the entire region," Mr. Gore said at a joint press conference with the Egyptian leader.

Mr. Mubarak expressed "fear" that failure by Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat to

accept a U.S. compromise solution aimed at ending 15 months of stalemate "will lead to much more complications in the future."

Mr. Arafat, who arrived in Cairo on Sunday for last minute consultations with Mr. Mubarak before heading for London, has accepted the U.S. proposal calling on Israel to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank, but it has been rejected by Mr. Netanyahu, who wants only a nine per cent pullout.

"We'll wait for the Palestinians to say their word because they have to decide, they have to accept or to refuse what is being proposed for them," Mr. Mubarak said before going into talks with the Palestinian leader.

Mr. Mubarak stressed that if the U.S. offer were accepted it should be followed by quick steps to ensure long-term success.

"We hope that the London meeting will be a success because we fear what may follow after that," said Mr. Mubarak.

Mr. Gore meanwhile also strongly defended his stop in Israel, where he attended 50th anniversary celebrations of the Jewish state before coming here, saying it was not inconsistent with U.S. relations with the Arab countries.

"There is absolutely no inconsistency at all in feeling an historic friendship for Israel and feeling passionately that it is in the best interest of Israel and of our other friends in the

region to have a successful conclusion in this peace process," Mr. Gore said.

The U.S. vice president also announced that Cairo and Washington had started talks on a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) to boost ties as part of a 1994 partnership to bolster economic growth and development in Egypt.

Egyptian and U.S. officials also signed four bilateral accords to strengthen legal and environmental cooperation, support small businesses and education, officials said.

Egypt is the second-largest recipient of U.S. aid after Israel and gets \$2.1 billion annually from Washington including \$815 million in civilian assistance and the rest in military aid.

Egypt would like to increase the volume of its exports to the United States and attract more U.S. investment.

Egypt has attracted \$2 billion in direct, non-oil investment from the United States and would like to increase that by an additional \$1 billion, Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri told the government press this week.

Egypt exported goods worth \$700 million to the United States — its first trade partner — last year and would like to raise that to \$1 billion by the year 2000, Mr. Ganzouri said.

Mr. Gore returns home late Sunday at the end of a tour which also took him to Saudi Arabia and the West Bank.



FIGHTING IN KOSOVO: An ethnic Albanian woman feeds Sunday her two-month-old niece Erblina whose young parents were killed, along with another woman, when a Serbian mortar bomb slammed into the courtyard of their family compound on Saturday while other relatives mourn. Fighting flared in the Drenica region of Kosovo on Saturday and Sunday (Reuters photo)

## British hostages freed in Yemen, headed for Sanaa

SANAA (AFP) — A British Council teacher and his family held hostage by Yemeni tribesmen since April 16 were released on Sunday and headed for Sanaa, police sources said.

They said David Mitchell, his wife Carolyn and their 14-year-old son Ben were freed in the Dhahran region southeast of the Yemeni capital after a pledge that their demands would be met.

The pledge was delivered by Sheikh Neji Al

Ruwishan, a tribal leader and prominent businessman sent by the government to mediate. He was escorting the hostages back to Sanaa.

The British embassy had no immediate confirmation of the release. "We have no news that we can confirm at the moment," David Pearce, the deputy head of mission, told AFP.

The Mitchells were seized in an ambush on the road from the southern city of Aden to Sanaa, as they drove to the capital's airport

for the wife and son to return to Britain after the Easter holidays.

Mr. Mitchell, a 48-year-old head teacher at the British Council in Aden, and his family were taken to the remote mountain village of Quradhi, close to Dhahran, some 160 km from Sanaa.

The area was ringed by security forces.

Yemeni authorities refrained from using force to avoid endangering the hostages' lives, while the British government said it

wanted the family released through peaceful means.

The kidnappers from the Beni Dabiyan tribe, through tribal mediators, have reportedly been demanding government aid such as roads, schools and electricity for their region.

More than 100 foreigners have been abducted since 1993 by Yemeni tribesmen.

The hostages have been used as bargaining chips in disputes with the authorities, but treated as guests and released unharmed.

## Algerian forces kill 23 rebels — paper

PARIS (R) — Algerian troops have killed 23 members of a rebel bomb squad known as Attafur (blowing up) in a raid south of Algiers, an Algerian newspaper reported on Sunday.

The French-language daily La Nouvelle République said troops tipped off by a rival Muslim group stormed the guerrillas' makeshift bomb-making workshop in the Bougara area in Blida province, 50 kilometres south of Algiers.

The troops killed all 23 men in the workshop and recovered five Kalashnikov assault rifles, 10 shot-guns and two bombs, the newspaper said.

It said the rebels were members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Algeria's most radical guerrilla faction. It did

not say which rival faction tipped off the troops.

GIA leader Hassan Hattab said in pamphlets plastered on walls in the streets of Algiers on Saturday that his followers would step up attacks on government forces and on members of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), armed wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

The GIA dismisses the AIS as a renegade group, saying it sold out on the Islamic cause when it declared a unilateral ceasefire last October.

Bombs and booty-trapped cars have killed thousands of people in the violence pitting Muslim guerrillas against government forces in the past six years.

Two women and a six-year-old child were killed by a

bomb on Friday south of Algiers as they were praying at the tomb of a recently assassinated relative.

Meanwhile, La Tribune newspaper said the deputy leader of the FIS, Ali Belhadj, had reportedly written a letter to rebels urging them to lay down weapons.

Belhadj is detained at a secret location after being sentenced in 1992 by a military court to 12 years imprisonment for undermining state security.

"If the information over Belhadj's letter telling rebels to end violence proves true, it would be the first time since the beginning of the violence that Belhadj had made such a call to end the killings," said La Tribune.

The report could not immediately be confirmed.

## Holbrooke holds shuttle talks on Cyprus

NICOSIA (AFP) — U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke held shuttle talks with Cypriot leaders Sunday on the second day of his mission aimed at ending the division of the island, with sources saying tough bargaining was continuing.

Before Sunday's first round of talks with Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash, Mr. Holbrooke declined to comment on the results of his previous day's meetings.

"I don't know, we will see,"

U.S. President Bill Clinton's Cyprus emissary told reporters. "Silence is golden," Mr. Denktash added.

Following the one-hour meeting in Nicosia's Turkish-held sector, Mr. Holbrooke left for the Greek-Cypriot-controlled part of the capital for 30 minutes of talks with Cyprus President Glafcos Clerides.

The U.S. envoy said he would meet Mr. Clerides again during the afternoon before crossing the U.N.-patrolled buffer zone

dividing the island for a second round of discussions with Mr. Denktash. Diplomatic sources said Mr. Holbrooke was working hard to resolve the most toughly disputed, the Turkish-Cypriots' representation in proposed future reunification talks.

Mr. Denktash accused the Greek-Cypriots of intransigence on the issue of Turkish-Cypriot representation and suggested Mr. Holbrooke may end his mediation on Monday if there is no progress.

## Khartoum team set for Sudan peace negotiations in Nairobi

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Negotiators from Sudan's Islamist junta were flying from Khartoum to Nairobi on Sunday for talks with southern rebels, though a top official has warned people not to "expect too much."

Sudanese President Omar El Bashir's security and defence council decided on Saturday night that its team for the session starting in Kenya on Monday would be led by Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail, the information ministry announced.

Mr. Ismail will be accompanied by some 15 pro-Khartoum officials from both north and south Sudan, instructed to "go straight into discussion of issues on the agenda for reaching genuine solutions," a statement said.

Last month, however, the deputy secretary general of the national congress formed by the junta, Ali Al Hajj Mohammad, stressed that people "should not expect too much of this round of talks."

He said the scheduled three days were "too short to be able to discuss all the problems on the agenda." Key issues are self-government in the south and deep-rooted opposition to strict Islamic law throughout Sudan.

The status of the south is due eventually to go to a referendum, while Mr. Bashir's regime, which ousted elected politicians in 1989, on Friday began a nationwide poll on a draft new constitution, which is controversial because of its vague provisions for free political parties.

Parsons of a multiparty system charge that the ambiguous text provides only for freedoms within a broad Islamic framework, but Islamists take the opposite view, saying the draft does not go far enough towards

### Sudanese university chief proposes compensating Egypt for property

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The director of a Sudanese university on confiscated Egyptian educational property here said it was too hard to return the property and Cairo should be compensated instead.

"It is now legally and practically difficult to relinquish" the Two Niles University in Khartoum which Sudan set up on Cairo University's Khartoum campus, confiscated in 1993, Awad Hajj Ali said in remarks published Sunday in the official press.

Sudan invested over half-a-million dollars in a laboratory

for the university after the confiscation and renamed the school Two Niles University. Mr. Ali told Al Anbaa newspaper.

In addition the country spent \$2.8 million maintaining the university buildings since the takeover, he said.

"All property and installations have been registered in the name of Al Nileen University [the Arabic name], and it has now become a legal institution," he said.

"Compensation is the legal and practical solution," he added.

five officials from the north and 10 from the south.

Mr. Ismail, Mr. Mohammad and Mr. Hemdoun are among the northerners, while southerners include former rebel leader Riek Machar, who has become assistant president and chairman of the South Sudanese Coordination Council, which gathers in other pro-Khartoum forces.

The junta is supported by the National Islamic Front (NIF), formally banned like other parties, while in 1996 the SPLA linked up with mainly exiled northern dissidents to a National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The SPLA has said their side in Nairobi will be led by a senior official, but not Garang.

Seven SPLA splinter-groups allied with Khartoum last year, but the southwest Bahr El Ghazal province force headed by Kerubino Kuanyin Bol redefected back to the SPLA in January, along with its government arms, and Mr. Kerubino led an attack on the town of Wau.

## Albright remains pessimistic on eve of key Middle East talks

LONDON (AP) — A pessimistic U.S. secretary of state meets the Israeli and Palestinian leaders Monday for what are billed as make or break talks to try to revive the stalled Middle East peace process.

The talks "are decisive for the future of the peace process," the senior Palestinian representative in Britain, Afif Safieh, said Sunday. The negotiations are teetering between "the desirable breakthrough and the possible breakdown."

The United States has warned that it may abandon its mediation if the 14-month stalemate over Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank continues. And Palestinian President Yasser Arafat reiterated that he will declare statehood in May 1999, regardless of whether there is a deal with Israel.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has already won

approval for an American initiative which calls for Israel to hand over 13 per cent of the West Bank. The phased Israeli withdrawal is to be linked to a Palestinian crackdown on Islamists.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has refused to accept the proposal despite intensive U.S. diplomatic efforts, including an unscheduled meeting early Sunday with Vice President Al Gore.

"There will be some progress, but anybody who expects a dramatic breakthrough will be disappointed," top Netanyahu aide David Bar-Ilan said after the Gore meeting.

Israel has said it will hand over 9 per cent of the West Bank, and some reports have said that Mr. Netanyahu is willing to offer up to 11 per cent. But the Palestinians say 13 per cent is their absolute minimum.

"The success of the talks in London will

depend on Netanyahu's actions because the problem does not lie anywhere else," Mr. Arafat told journalists in Gaza before leaving for Britain.

"His policy is to try to gain time," the Palestinian leader told London's Sunday Observer.

Mr. Netanyahu is "a pyromaniac on a powder keg," the Palestinian diplomat Mr. Safieh told Sky Television. "And I believe the Americans are seeing him increasingly, not as a strategic asset in the Middle East, but as a strategic liability."

He complained that Mr. Netanyahu's vision of a future Palestine was of tiny enclaves, isolated from each other, "that are totally unviable and totally humiliated and have no ingredients for the economic take-off."

As Ms. Albright headed for London

Saturday, State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said there is "no reason to believe we are in a position to bridge the gaps." And he warned that there would be "grave dangers" if the stalemate continues.

Mr. Albright was scheduled to dine with British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook on Sunday night. Prime Minister Tony Blair is expected to meet with Mr. Netanyahu and then Mr. Arafat Monday morning before they hold separate talks with Ms. Albright.

Mr. Safieh said if there is a possibility of a breakthrough, the Palestinian and Israeli leaders might meet together with Ms. Albright — or "even more interestingly" with a European representative as well. That presumably would be Mr. Cook or Mr. Blair since Britain currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.

The London meeting will take place

exactly one year before the May 4, 1999 deadline for the completion of Middle East peace negotiations set in the 1993 Oslo peace accords.

All sides know the peace process cannot drift indefinitely.

Mr. Arafat reiterated to The Sunday Times that next May he will announce the independence of Palestine.

"My decision is final," he was quoted as saying.

Added Palestinian envoy Mr. Safieh: "I believe Palestinian statehood is not only our right but I also believe it's a Jewish responsibility."

Mr. Netanyahu has hinted he would retaliate by annexing some of the West Bank. And with both sides freed of restraints imposed by the peace accords, many fear renewed violence.

### Thurman and Hawke get married

NEW YORK (AP) — Prospective parents Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke got married in a cathedral decorated with lilacs, cherry blossoms and candles lining the bride's walk-up the aisle, the New York Post reported.

Invited guests included Richard Gere and other celebrities, the newspaper said. Thurman, who's pregnant, wore a plus-size Vera Wang wedding gown. A chapel used for the reception afterward was decorated like the set of "Casablanca," according to an unidentified church worker quoted by the Post. It's the second marriage for Thurman, 28.

Her ex-husband is fellow actor Gary Oldman, whom she married in 1990. It's the first marriage for Hawke, 27. The couple co-starred in "Gattaca."

Ginger Spice to appear in Penthouse

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Glamour magazine's Penthouse is dishing up Geri Halliwell — alias Ginger Spice of the Spice Girls — for its June issue, using photos taken years before she became an international pop phenomenon.

In "The Geri Story" accompanying the photos, Penthouse notes that Halliwell made her start in showbiz by working as a club dancer in Spain and a "glamour" model. "For all her boasts about her potency being due to her brain, Geri's most noticeable natural endowments are strictly below her neck," the glossy men's magazine sniggers. She "appears to have been cloned in some sort of mad scientific experiment to produce a scaled-down version of Madonna's voice fused to Jayne Mansfield-size boobs."

Streisand's new movie draws unfriendly fire from Heston

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Barbara Streisand's movie about a widow's campaign against handgun violence drew unfriendly fire from staunch pro-gun activist and actor Charlton Heston.

Streisand countered by saying Heston hasn't even seen it. The film, called "The Long Island Incident," tells the story of Carolyn McCarthy, who lobbied for gun control and became a congresswoman after her husband was killed and her son was seriously wounded by a gunman who opened fire on a crowded New York commuter train in December 1993. Six people were killed. Heston, a National Rifle Association vice president, scheduled a news conference for Monday to challenge the film's alleged deliberate misrepresentation of the group and elected officials who support it.

Posh Spice will feature geese in wedding

LONDON (AP) — Not surprisingly, Posh Spice Victoria Adams is planning a posh wedding — and she thinks geese wandering around the garden are a perfect touch. The singer — the first of the five "Spice Girls" to become engaged — told British Channel 4 that when she marries soccer star David Beckham she wants "all the fancy stuff, the things you see in films." And how did geese fit in? Well, the wedding coordinator designing the couple's big day suggested geese, and she liked the idea. "I don't know — they just look good, don't they?" she asked. The couple became engaged in January but don't plan to marry until next year, because of work commitments.

### King calls King Fahd, M

MANAMA (AP) — His Majesty King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz called Saudi King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz on Sunday. The two leaders discussed the peace process impasse and voiced their desire to see the process move forward. The Saudi and Kuwaiti leaders, King Fahd and King Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, also discussed the latest developments in the peace process, particularly on the Palestinian issue.

Volume 23 Number 6830

## Mideast Albright

LONDON (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is scheduled to meet separately in London on Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

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